"I CAN FEEL MY GRIN TURN TO A GRIMACE": FROM THE SOPHIATOWN SHEBEENS TO THE STREETS OF SOWETO ON THE PAGES OF *DRUM*, *THE CLASSIC*, *NEW CLASSIC*, AND *STAFFRIDER*

by

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DEDICATION

In addition to the words that follow, the years and miles that went into putting them together are dedicated to my parents, Winifred and Kevin Keaney, who are unmatched in their perpetual, selfless devotion to the success and happiness of their children; to my sisters Liz and Alice who have set exhausting examples with which I struggle to keep up; and to Sarah and Kaya whose infinite patience and unbounded love have sustained me for so many years.

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This thesis is the culmination of two years of work and it would disingenuous of me to pretend that the document that follows is mine alone. Many people have helped me along the way and are deserving of more thanks than can be adequately given here, but for now, this will have to suffice.

Beginning with my first trip to South Africa in 2008, I must thank Jewel Koopman and Estelle Liebenberg-Barkhuizen of the Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for allowing me access and providing guidance as I fumbled about their wonderful facility. Laurence Piper and Sherran Clarence and their children Ethan and Sam deserve a great deal of thanks for welcoming me into their home and providing me with the company of a family and a place to sleep. Angus Gibson and Fiona Rankin-Smith were also wonderful hosts during the few days I was able to spend in Johannesburg, and I truly appreciate their hospitality. I would also like to offer a broad thank-you to the staffs of the libraries at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, both the Pietermaritzburg Campus and Howard Campus. These libraries were incredible places for a student trying to find his way in South African history. Alex Isaacson deserves a special mention here. I not only physically imposed upon him by occupying valuable floorspace in his guest cottage, but I also intellectually bombarded him with the questions of someone new to both the country and study of South Africa. My friend Alex was incredibly gracious, and I know that my first time in South Africa would not have been nearly as adventurous and colorful had he not been an eager travel companion on trips to Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban.

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Late in my thesis research Nat Nakasa began to assume greater importance, and I became fixated on nailing down exactly as many details of his final days as possible. I would like to thank my uncle, the Honorable Judge John Gleeson of the Eastern District of New York, and the no-less honorable Kerry Sweet, Deputy Inspector of the New York City Police Department for procuring Nakasa's certificate of death and the police report of the officer who responded to Nakasa's suicide. Despite my many missteps, these men were exceptionally patient and ultimately successful in uncovering these documents which have shed some light on the last, dark days of this talented writer.

Over the years I have imposed upon many people who have read and commented on bits and pieces of this thesis. What follows would not be nearly as polished or refined without the insightful commentary of Ben Carton, Alex Issacson, Winifred Keaney, Alice Keaney, Liz Keaney, Justin Mineo, and Mark Depew. Despite such incisive criticism, the final edit remained my own and any mistakes or inaccuracies that follow are my responsibility alone.

Finally, it is not possible for me to express a level of gratitude necessary to thank Dr. Benedict Carton for all that he has done for me. Literally, not one sentence that follows would have been possible had he not taken a personal interest in my academic development and urged me to *phambili* along the way. Ben graciously invited me into his extensive network of South African friends and colleagues, exposing a world that has enriched me in untold ways. The patience he has exhibited as I have struggled through this long project is indicative of his quality as a teacher. Much more than my advisor, mentor, and friend, Ben Carton is the answer I give when asked why I study South African history. Viva.

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ABSTRACT

"I CAN FEEL MY GRIN TURN TO A GRIMACE": FROM THE SOPHIATOWN SHEBEENS TO THE STREETS OF SOWETO ON THE PAGES OF *DRUM*, *THE CLASSIC*, *NEW CLASSIC*, AND *STAFFRIDER*

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This thesis uses a comparative framework of historical analysis to investigate four South African literary magazines printed between 1951 and 1983. *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* function as platforms for the exhibition of writing that depicted the authors' interpretations of the "black experience" in South Africa. In the process, these writers probed controversial race relations, contradictions of "nation" and "community," and rival strategies of protest and negotiation. These four magazines formed a distinct literary lineage of quotidian narratives and trope characters, yet the variations within this lineage reveal how these writers responded to the social and political exigencies of life under apartheid in South Africa. On the pages of these magazines writers publicly debated their place within a racially stratified society, and fictional characters negotiated a world remarkably similar to that of their creators. Through analysis of divisions within black liberation movements, the emergence of Black Consciousness, and the assertion of

youth power in the Soweto Uprising of 1976, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that under apartheid, there were no clearly defined spheres of politics or art. Consequently, in their quest for relevancy, many of these writers found themselves producing politicized fiction as they articulated the frustrations and aspirations of their readers. In doing so, literary artists, political activists, and fictional characters revealed a common desire for the comforts of community while simultaneously contesting the criteria for membership.

1. Introduction

On 13 January 1983, South African writer and magazine editor Jaki Seroke wrote to the Directorate of Publications in Pretoria requesting information on the first issue of his "revived quarterly literary journal *The Classic*."[1] He had just been notified by S.F. Du Toit, a government director at the Publications Appeal Board, that *The Classic* was about to be censored by apartheid authorities as an "undesirable" journal because it "aggrandised and idolised" various "leaders of the A.N.C. [African National Congress] as well as the A.N.C. itself."[2] As Seroke closed his brief letter of inquiry, he expressed opposition to Du Toit's decision: "[W]e do not think that it is an undesirable publication," Seroke said, because "ever since it was established in 1963" it had served as "a vehicle of South African black literature for generation after generation of creative writers." While Seroke claimed to represent all *Classic* authors, in actuality he glossed over the ways in which his magazine diverged from its literary ancestor of the same name.[3]

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[1] Letter Jaki Seroke to The Directorate of Publications, 13 Jan. 1983. Cape Town Archives Repository (KAB). File P82/11/130.

[2] Letter S.F. Du Toit to Jaki Seroke, 27 Jan. 1983. This appeal, initiated by Seroke on behalf of the African Writers' Association, was upheld and S.F. Du Toit wrote to Seroke on 19 May, 1983 to inform him that "the Appeal Board declared the publication to be not undesirable under section 47 (2) of the Act." The Act in question was the Publications Act of 1974 and the relevant section dealt with written material that threatened state security. KAB P82/11/130.

[3] Jaki Seroke's magazine, *The Classic*, was the third iteration of this publication. *The Classic* was originally created by Nathaniel "Nat" Nakasa in 1963 and ran until 1971. In 1975, Sipho Sepamla received the remains of the grant which had sustained *The Classic* and used this money to revive Nakasa's magazine as *New Classic* which survived until 1978. Seroke published his first issue of the resurrected *Classic* in 1982.

The differences between Seroke's journal and its predecessor were not only apparent in style, but also in judgments, which appraised the dramatic processes buffeting South Africa in the second half of the twentieth century. The question of what to do about these forces, ranging from state crackdowns to armed struggles, triggered intense disagreements among black authors who published in other journals critically examined in this thesis, namely *Drum*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider*.[4] Their writings revolved around a singular crisis: since the far-reaching oppression of apartheid signified that "nothing in South Africa" was "neutral," how could the literary arts ever remain independent of politics?[5] Indeed, liberation movements gaining momentum between the 1950s and 1980s knew better the answer to this question. They drew inspiration from the writing in *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider*, which probed controversial race relations, contradictions of "nation" and "community," and rival strategies of protest and negotiation.

Yet *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* were not natural mouthpieces for the radical revolutionary. On the contrary, their contributors were more committed to voicing the hopes and fears of a disenfranchised majority than planning strikes or sabotaging government installations. Publishing stories and articles that focused on the ordinary life of township dwellers and rural migrants, *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* forged a distinct literary lineage with its own set of quotidian narratives

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[4] For this thesis I consulted the complete run of *The Classic* (twelve issues, 1963-1971) and *New Classic* (five issues, 1975-1978). *Drum* and *Staffrider* enjoyed much longer lives. My investigation included the issues of *Drum* from 1951 until 1958; and *Staffrider* articles published between 1978 and 1983, the year the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed.

[5] This declaration was made by the author Njabulo Ndebele in an article titled "Art and Society: Life-Sustaining Poetry of a Fighting People." *Staffrider* 5, no. 3 (1983): 45.

and trope characters. Of course, this lineage was neither uniform nor static. The editors of *Drum* and *The Classic*, for example, strove to "democratize writing" with short-story contests. In contrast, the writers of *New Classic* and *Staffrider* urged readers to abandon esoteric fiction and create a new Black Consciousness (BC) through works that painstakingly depicted the real-life "black experience" under apartheid. Thus, a central aim of this thesis is to analyze the social and political significance of such differences, whether evident in *Drum*'s sensational crime reporting and presentation of pin-up girls, *New Classic*'s near-devotion to promoting prose in the township patois known as *Tsotsi'taal*, or *Staffrider*'s collaborative approach to literary production, which entailed bringing together artists from segregated communities to work on joint essays and stories portraying what non-racial cooperation might bring about in a free Azania (a favorite Black Consciousness name for the post-apartheid Republic of South Africa).

Indeed these journals published snippets of a cultural foment that eventually reached wider audiences through the written word and oral transmission. Employing methods of literary "realism," many writers of *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* constructed plotlines that closely mirrored familiar experiences in raucous shebeens, demoralizing pass-offices, and overcrowded trains. Some authors embraced this style of "creative writing" as a form of "socio-political documentation," believing it represented the true sentiments of an oppressed majority.[6] Other contributors to these four magazines disagreed and tried to transcend the "tyranny of place," defined as it was

[6] Mbulelo Mzamane made this controversial proposal in an article titled "Literature and Politics among Blacks in South Africa," reasoning that because "the most important lessons for South Africans are in the political sphere, a writer in that land is unimportant, irrelevant and probably alienated unless he is political" (*New Classic* 5 (1978): 42).

by the omnipresent apartheid repression, while creating their fiction.[7] While the official censors attempted to police these literary forms, the writers of *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* debated the future of South Africa and expressed dissent in ways that authorities like the Directorate of Publications could not easily recognize. Indeed, this thesis explores such contentious opinions through a comparative framework of historical analysis that begins with the "*Drum* generation" of Can Themba and Nat Nakasa, authors who considered art to be above politics. The thesis then moves into a fuller discussion of *New Classic* writers such as Sipho Sepamla and Mbulelo Mzamane, defenders of the mantle of Black Consciousness, an amorphous ideology that fostered solidarity, community improvement, and self-reliance among the black population. This thesis then concludes with an investigation of the ideas of *Staffrider* authors, among them Miriam Tlali and Mothobi Mutloatse, who aggressively promoted the welfare of the collective over the interests of the individual in politically incendiary fiction.[8]

Though these magazines differed in significant ways, *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* each offered a unique setting in which black authors could expand

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[7] "Tyranny of place" is Es'kia Mphahlele's (formerly Ezekiel) phrase and he used it in different ways throughout his career. In his autobiography, *Down Second Avenue*, Mphahlele writes that he became sick of "protest creative writing" and that his inspiration to write had been sapped by the literary trends in South Africa. Reaching Lagos, Nigeria after leaving his homeland, he felt a great relief and completed the work that would become *Down Second Avenue*. However, upon his return to South Africa in the early 1980s, Mphahlele contributed an article titled "The Tyranny of Place" to Seroke's version of *The Classic*. In this article Mphahlele writes that he has returned to South Africa because he had "abandoned" himself to "the tyranny of place" and needed to experience the "textures" of South Africa in order to create authentic African fiction. Mphahlele acknowledged that "fiction depends a lot on particularities of place" but through these somewhat contradictory evaluations it seems he believed that inspirational "particularities" could easily morph into a stifling "tyranny" (*The Classic* 1 no. 1 (1982): 71-4).

[8] This study takes its cue from Nigerian writer Chinweizu's inclusive definition of literature as "all the genres of publicly communicated written matter of a society." Chinweizu's definition is useful here because it allows the non-literary scholar to interpret the material printed in these magazines without delving into the depths of the field-specific discussions of what merits the term "literature." Chinweizu et. al. *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature* vol. 1 (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1983), 1.

their own craft, usually in response to the challenges of their peers who contested standards of writing and audiences that demanded entertaining fiction relevant to their daily experiences. Underlying these questions of quality and readership was one common concern that appeared to plague contributors to these four magazines: If their craft was to have relevancy beyond that of artistic expression, what part should black authors play in an increasingly inescapable struggle against white supremacy? The answers emerged in short stories that shared one particular aspiration: new literature could very well lead the masses to a new cultural community and national democracy.

The writers examined in this thesis were not alone in their desire to exert political influence through evocative language and plotlines. Since the advent of apartheid in 1948 and certainly before, leaders of major liberation movements also endeavored to mobilize their audiences by framing slogans that appealed to the masses. In fact one could see similar rhetoric animating strategy meetings of protest organizations and editorial conferences of black journals; both ruminated over measures of articulation ("highbrow" European or "everyman" African); the best way to impress and hold audiences (black or white, rural or urban); and the decisive outcome (entertainment or emancipation?). At the heart of such struggles in *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* were artists who were aware of their place in history, for they had personally witnessed —and in some cases participated in—the pendulum swings between African accommodation and African resistance to colonial rule in the first half of the twentieth century. If anything, the shifting predicaments in which many of these writers found

themselves illustrate the difficulty in demarcating literature as cultural activity and literature as political exercise in modern South African history.[9]

Therefore, a careful consideration of the social tensions in literary thought and their impact on ordinary black people is essential to any historical understanding of this political milieu in which these writers and political leaders operated. To this end, this thesis begins with a close examination of *Drum*, a magazine that presaged the fateful division between the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) over disagreements over the racial composition of the liberation movements on the eve of the 1960s.[10] Such a conflict between multiracial and race-conscious concepts of citizenship and social organization was remarkably tame on the pages of *Drum*, but grew in intensity as the apartheid state clamped down with increasing ferocity on black dissent throughout the 1960s.[11] Nat Nakasa, the creator and chief editor of *The Classic*, provides a haunting example of the artist who confronted a mercilessly draconian government.

Nakasa is also a pivotal figure in this study because of the acquaintances he made and the company he kept. An exemplar of the "*Drum* school" of writers, Nakasa blazed a trail to *The Classic*, which he established as one of the first wholly black-edited

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[9] See Michael Vaughan, "Literature and Politics: Currents in South African Writing in the Seventies" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9 no. 1 (Oct., 1982): 118-38, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2636735 (accessed December 5, 2010); Mike Kirkwood, "Literature and Popular Culture in South Africa" *Third World Quarterly* 9 no. 2, After Apartheid (Apr., 1987): 657-71, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3991902 (accessed December 5, 2010).

[10] The inclusion of liberal whites in the Congress Alliance indicated to these Africanist-separatists the ANC's devotion to multiracialism. According to Tom Lodge's analysis, the Africanists believed that this multiracialism "served to perpetuate the psychological subservience and dependency on whites upon which minority domination rested" (Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa since 1945 (New York: Longman Inc., 1983), 84).

[11] These polarities in black political thought, described by C.R.D. Halisi as "black republicanism" and "multiracial unionism," were expressed through "individual thought and action" that animated South African literary production (C.R.D. Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 7).

magazines in South Africa. He also became the rare recipient, along with his childhood friend and fellow *Drum* writer, Lewis Nkosi, of a Nieman Fellowship to Harvard University in 1964. In the context of white minority rule, the maintenance of which required incredible force and expansive surveillance in the 1960s, Nakasa's achievements are not only remarkable, but they also require deeper scrutiny as chapter four makes clear. Nakasa could not have left South Africa for the Ivy League without the travel funds provided by a CIA sponsored source that lured Nakasa and his magazine into the standoff between the United States and its Cold War enemy, the Soviet Union. While it is unclear how South African readers responded to the revelation of CIA support for *The Classic*, in the years after Nakasa's expulsion to The United States, a new political movement that unwittingly shared the CIA interest in the power of literary culture as a political weapon, namely Black Consciousness, emerged in universities across South Africa. This incipient, student-driven movement inspired the contributors to Nakasa's successor magazine who approached their literary mission with the zeal of combatants, aggressively confronting apartheid policies and promoting Black Consciousness through depictions of the psychological suffering of black and white South Africans caught in a system of racial domination. Following in the footsteps of *New Classic*, *Staffrider* also supported the close relationship between the literary arts and the militant assertiveness of BC. Upon the banning of an issue in 1979, the publishers of this populist magazine defiantly claimed in an open letter to the Directorate of Publications that the stories of *Staffrider* were "*perceptions* of reality," and the publishers continued to argue that when these "honestly felt perceptions of reality are not permitted a hearing…the peaceful future

of our society is endangered."[12] This letter reveals the gravity of the South African author's duty as interpreted by *Staffrider*: to safeguard a peaceful future of the nation through the open expression and free exchange of ideas.

It is understandable that these writers, like their politically active counterparts, would be searching for nonviolent methods to oppose apartheid, knowing the extent of the immense military and police powers wielded by the state. Many had learned with horror of the police shooting of unarmed protestors at Sharpeville in 1960 and the brutal operations of security forces in Soweto which quashed the student uprising of 1976. After Sharpeville and an attendant declaration of martial law (one of many states of emergency to come), black activism and artistic expression literally went underground, largely as a result of new arrest and detention legislation, and stricter censorship measures. But sixteen years later, despite the sharp burst of government violence in Soweto, black arts and politics revived, arguably becoming more visible and vocal because of the emergence of Black Consciousness. As this thesis seeks to show, the writings spanning this period in *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* present, as few other primary sources do, a running narrative of how the general sentiments and life circumstances of black people evolved between 1960 and 1976.

It becomes clear through the writing in these magazines that the life circumstances of black township residents was one of profound insecurity not limited to the constant threat of official police action. Years of economic exploitation and political misrepresentation had created deplorable conditions in many black communities. These

[12] Letter from Ravan to Director of Publications published in *Staffrider* 2 no., 2 (Apr./May, 1979): 2-3. Emphasis in original.

conditions had generated a "muscular tension" among black South Africans that was periodically released through violent encounters between equally disadvantaged blacks.[13] In her book *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology*, Gail Gerhart has noted the effect of this tension. "Measured by any index of social pathology known to industrial societies, the African population of South Africa's cities ranked among the world's most troubled masses of humanity" wrote Gerhart about late 1950s South Africa.[14] Elaborating, she stated that "the best substantiation for this characterization can be found in the short stories and novels of black South African writers like Can Themba, Lewis Nkosi, Nat Nakasa, Alex La Guma, Dugmore Boetie, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Bloke Modisane, Arthur Maimane, Tod Matshikiza [sic], Casey Motsisi and others."[15] Through her reading of South African fiction, Gerhart constructed a picture of a population under assault. In addition to dodging police constables, township residents in South Africa had to be ever vigilant against predatory tsotsis (gangsters). Traveling about the townships after nightfall, particularly on payday, was a dangerous way to tempt fate in the form of a tsotsi's knife. The implications of this violent environment were significant; in addition to the personal insecurity felt by many residents, a sense of helplessness accompanied the knowledge that one was unable to protect one's family members from robbery, rape, or even murder.

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[13] This is the assessment of the Martinican doctor and Algerian revolutionary Frantz Fanon. "Hence the dreams of the colonial subject are muscular dreams, dreams of action, dreams of aggressive vitality" writes Fanon, "the muscular tension of the colonized periodically erupts into bloody fighting between tribes, clans, and individuals" (Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 15-17).
[14] Gail M. Gerhart. *Black Power in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 170.
[15] Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa*, 170n55.

Both political leaders and literary figures envisioned community development as a salve for this insecurity. ANC, PAC, and later BC activists all sought to create coherent organizations to support the struggle for liberation, while writers tapped into the feelings of township residents who sought a similar mobilization for the more immediate local goals of personal safety and security. A deep reading of the short stories in these magazines unearths a desperate longing for the comforts of community. More explicit in *Staffrider* than in *Drum*, this desire is nonetheless apparent throughout all these magazines as the frustration and fears of the fictional characters of these stories reflected their creators' status as disenfranchised individuals without adequate structures of support and protection. Certain characters created by short story writers persisted in the canon of South African literature, yet how these trope figures were depicted was subject to the social and political currents which swept up their authors. In *Drum*, the tsotsi (which drew many characteristics from the trickster figure in African folklore) and the shebeen queen were declarations of the permanence of black residents in urban areas. Defying the laws of apartheid, these two figures survived through their own ingenuity. As apartheid ground on, and liberation movements faltered, individual survival under a repressive government was insufficient justification for the exploitation of one's neighbors either by the knife or chemically-tainted *skokiaan* (an alcoholic township concoction). With the emergence of BC inspired solidarity, the welfare of the collective assumed greater importance as a strategy for solving the problems of black South Africa. In the 1970s, as internal political activism was reinvigorated, a dangerous new character arose through the pages of these magazines: the sellout. A selfish figure, the sellout collaborated with the

apartheid system by sacrificing his/her neighbors for moderate individual gains. Conscious of this threat to community solidarity, writers of the late 1960s began to construct a protagonist capable of thwarting the machinations of the sellout: the student leader. Young, action-oriented, community-conscious, and politically active, the student leader was the antithesis of the sellout. This new character was created by grafting an earlier character type, the assertive youth, onto the flesh and bone model provided by the rebellious students of Soweto. Embodying many BC virtues, the student leader experienced a quasi-apotheosis in *Staffrider* as a hero-figure who vanquished the two characters sabotaging the creation of secure communities in the 1970s: the tsotsi and the sellout.

This campaign against the tsotsi and sellout was not merely a literary conflict but also a real struggle waged by political activists. Unemployed and uneducated township youths prone to criminal activity, and black people who refused to acknowledge complicity in their own oppression were serious impediments to the mass mobilization that lay at the heart of liberation strategies. If these contingents of tsotsis and sellouts could not be incorporated into the struggle, then the only other recourse was to purge these undesirable elements in the creation of a national community. The pages of literary magazines and township streets were the sites of conflict as writers and activists sought to impose unity on the surging opposition to apartheid. This tsotsi-sellout-student leader conflict illustrates how political and literary actors, subject to the same social pressures, participated in a developing intellectual and political discourse which culminated in the

shouldering of the burdens of struggle by a generation of youths who would become the vanguard of a non-violent, non-racial, liberation front in the 1980s.

2. "When we entered the decade of the fifties we had no literary heroes": *Drum* Magazine, 1951-1958[16]

In March of 1951, *The African Drum* (the title of which would later be shortened to *Drum*, and from here out will be referred to as such) made its debut as a magazine written by Africans, for Africans. In the opening editorial, then editor, Robert Crisp, a former "South African tank commander and Springbok cricketer," laid out the purpose of the magazine.[17] *Drum* was to provide a means of expression and encouragement to all African artists: writers, poets, painters, sculptors, and musicians. According to Crisp, this creative outlet aimed be a source of "pleasure and enlightenment" for those who read the magazine or listened to it read by others.[18] He also promised the reader that "you will look in vain within the covers of this magazine for any attempt to mold your thoughts politically or for any expression or denial of a political creed."[19] *Drum* would operate according to two mottos: "progress through knowledge and culture" and "love thy neighbor as thyself."[20] Crisp accurately foreshadowed the importance the 1950s would hold for African written culture and political organization with his declaration that *Drum* was "capturing a moment of time not without significance in your history."[21] This

[16] Lewis Nkosi, *Home and Exile* (London: Longman, Green and Co. Ltd., 1965), 7.
[17] Michael Chapman, *The Drum Decade: Stories from the 1950s* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1989), 186.
[18] *Drum* 1, no. 1 (Mar. 1951): 3.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] *Drum* 1, no. 1 (Mar. 1951): 3.

moment was preserved with flashy covers and pin-up pictorials, in articles about sports, music, entertainment, and through the fictional stories that were a regular feature of *Drum*. In *The Drum Decade,* Michael Chapman notes Graeme Addison's perceptive critique that this format was somewhat deceptive since "its [*Drum*'s] commercial guise belied its importance as an articulator of the black experience and black aspirations."[22] As an "entertainment-expose-picture periodical" that frequently published short stories written by its readers, *Drum* represented a wide spectrum of black South African experiences.[23] Appealing to a broad audience, *Drum* influenced cultural symbols, popularizing shebeen culture and glorifying the shebeen queen and tsotsi (gangster) as figures of power outside state control.

Chapman has credited *Drum* with ushering in the modern forms of black South African short stories as opposed to more traditional, "anonymous" oral folk-tales.[24] The short stories featured in *Drum* are inextricably entangled in the social and political milieu in which they were written. Chapman described this complex relationship, explaining that the stories of *Drum* simultaneously reflected and influenced the "textures of the 'black experience'" in South African urban areas.[25] The black experience in South Africa after the 1948 election of Daniel F. Malan and the Nationalist Party was marked by intense repression and an increasingly difficult struggle for basic human rights.

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[22] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 186.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 183.
[25] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 185. In the introduction to *The Drum Decade*, John Matshikiza (the son of *Drum* writer Todd Matshikiza) describes this dual function of the magazine. Matshikiza recalls reading old issues of *Drum* and having "a sense of walking down old familiar streets all over again- which is impossible, because I was too young to have walked down those streets in those times. And yet it is all burned in my memory" (ix). The writing of *Drum* structured the way in which Matshikiza "remembered" South Africa of the 1950s.

Considering the surging black political activism of this decade, it is surprising that the fiction of *Drum* was not overtly political in nature. Despite the fact that the Nationalist government considered any urban Africans who were writing and postulating new ideas to be political threats, in a non-totalitarian interpretation of politics, *Drum* fiction was remarkably apolitical. This is not to say that the writing in this magazine was without political significance; as Chapman has noted, the writing of *Drum* was attuned to "the most urgent currents of life in the townships of the Witwatersrand" and can be read as a "social barometer of the decade."[26] In the chapter that follows, the fiction of *Drum* will be examined with a critical eye for intersections of literary trends and political developments. Many of the raw social tensions and pressures that stimulated black political action in the 1950s, and subsequently caused divisions within the liberation movements, were also experienced by the fictional characters created by those who wrote for *Drum*. The myriad ways in which these characters negotiated the treacherous landscape of urban South Africa were drawn from the experiences of their creators and other South Africans who were learning what it meant to live under apartheid.

The Programme of Action and The Freedom Charter: Competing Strategies for Liberation

The complexities of the South African liberation movements have filled the pages of many books; for the purposes of this chapter, discussion of the political developments of the 1950s will be limited to the emergence of a more radical strain of African nationalism within the African National Congress (ANC) that exacerbated the divide

[26] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 185.

between liberal and republican conceptions of citizenship. These concepts of citizenship were categorized by C.R.D. Halisi in his scholarly study *Black Political Thought in the Making of South African Democracy* as multiracial unionism and black republicanism, respectively.[27] The writers of *Drum* generally gravitated toward a multiracial union, viewing themselves as cosmopolitan citizens contributing to an international literary culture. One of the most adamant proponents of this multiracialism, Nat Nakasa, will be examined in the next two chapters as a cautionary tale against assuming that these categories of citizenship were fixed. When considering Nakasa as an example it appears that his tendencies toward multiracial unionism or black republicanism were reactions to immediate circumstances, flexible strategies rather than deeply rooted ideological tenets. Black South African writers, like their non-literary countrymen, negotiated this polarity of inclusive non-racialism and race-conscious exclusion in determining the criteria for membership in their communities. As their perceptions of what types of community were feasible changed, so too did their ideas about who belonged and who did not.

The 1950s marked the first decade under the apartheid Nationalist government that owed its election to a wide base of rural and working class Afrikaners.[28] Abandoning the rhetoric of "trusteeship" that had been employed by Jan Smuts's United Party, Malan's Nationalist government began to enshrine white dominance through the

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[27] C.R.D. Halisi, *Black Political Thought* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 1. Halisi explains that "multiracial union and black republican identity" reflect "a prime polarity in black political thought." Conceptualized in other regions subject to racial domination as "black power-civil rights," "race-consciousness-nonracial," or "Afrocentrism-Eurocentrism," Halisi defends his use of this "theoretical vantage point" which is "'indigenous' to black political thought" because "these polarities reflect social tensions in the lives of black people" and "find expression in individual thought and action" (7). All four magazines in this study, *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider*, were platforms from which individual experiences with this polarity were expressed.

[28] Gail Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology*, 4.

passage of increasingly draconian laws.[29] These laws were unabashedly designed to legally regulate every aspect of black South African life and in the process, according to Gail Gerhart's analysis in *Black Power in South Africa*, "instill Africans with a belief in their inferiority to whites."[30] The racist, segregationist legislation of the Nationalist government compounded the existing "political anger" of black South Africans that resulted from the "loss of ancestral land" to successive waves of European colonizers.[31] Halisi has noted that "the conquest of African land assaulted traditional notions of community and gradually provided African nationalism with a social basis that was broader than language, ethnicity, or culture."[32]

Seeking to respond to the "social alienation" caused by the loss of land, prominent South African chiefs and educated leaders gathered in 1912 in Bloemfontein at the initiative of Zulu lawyer Pixley ka Isaka Seme to form the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). The goal of the SANNC was to work for all Africans toward the building of a "nation." These leaders rejected "ethnic parochialism" in favor of solidarity "based on their wider identity as a racial group subject to the common conditions of

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[29] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 85. Mixed marriages were outlawed in 1949; sexual relations between races were forbidden with an extension of the Immorality Act of 1927; the Population Registration Act, Group Areas Act, and Suppression of Communism Act were all passed in 1950, and 1953 saw the Separate Amenities and Bantu Education Acts.

[30] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 161. See Bonner, Delius, Posel eds. *Apartheid's Genesis* for fifteen exceptional essays that engage the complexities of apartheid as a system that emerged from the "strains produced by the co-existence of a racially exclusive social and political order with an economic system based on the incorporation of expanding numbers of black workers" (Bonner, Delius, Posel eds. *Apartheid's Genesis: 1935-1962* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993), 2).

[31] Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 19. According to Halisi, for black South Africans, land was "more than mere soil," it was "the symbol of a community's cohesion and spirit." Halisi continued to explain that dispossession from this land "on the basis of race produced a form of social alienation unlike that resulting from wars among Africans before the arrival of Europeans." The alienation described by Halisi indicates the importance of race as a signifier of the "other" and points to the profound impact of racial conflict upon individuals and social relations.

[32] Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 21.

discrimination."[33] In his call for the congress, Seme derided "the demon of racialism…these divisions, these jealousies, [which] are the cause of all our woes and of all our backwardness and ignorance today."[34] The SANNC immediately had a political cause in 1913 with the passage of the Native Land Act, an audacious plan of social engineering that expelled thousands of African labor-tenants from white farms. The SANNC submitted a petition "couched in the language of duty and obligation" to the British Parliament, calling upon the imperial sense of color-blindness as a reason to influence their former colony.[35] This early political activism demonstrated the SANNC's "commit[ment] to a form of opposition which stressed responsible citizenship and disdained popular agitation."[36] The name of this organization would change to the

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[33] Gerhart, *Black Power,* 12. Halisi deftly summarizes that "the myth of South Africa as a nation containing many separate nations was the core rationale for segregation and apartheid." Citing the 1906 Natal rebellion against a poll tax led by the minor Zulu chief Bambatha as a watershed incident, Halisi states that from this point on, "the primary focus of black resistance became segregation, rooted as it was in partial prolerarianization" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought,* 36-7). Earlier in his study of black political thought, Halisi indicated that the creation of a proletariat in South Africa required the "destruction of traditional conceptions of rights, as well as customary forms of social protection, in order to eliminate or weaken a community's control over its means of subsistence" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought,* 15). White seizure of land was remarkably effective in eroding the authority of traditional African leaders and as British colonial official Theophilus Shepstone had discovered in late-nineteenth-century Natal, it was possible to manipulate African structures of power in such a way that "wed" these "African cultural systems to wage labor regimes" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought,* 41). This system of indirect rule, which was a precursor to the establishment of the bantustan homeland system under the Nationalist government, led to the creation of what Mahmood Mamdani has described as the "bifurcated state." Mamdani's study of the legacy of colonialism in Africa, *Citizen and Subject*, addresses the "Janus-faced" colonial state that differentiated between those who were beholden to "civil power" which enforced rights, and those who were obligated by "customary power" and its adherence to traditions. The fundamental split of Mamdani's bifurcated state was between "urban civil power" and "rural tribal authority." This urban-rural divide would be a central theme in many *Drum* short stories as writers wrestled with the implications of this bifurcated state, which, according to Mamdani, "tried to keep apart forcibly that which socioeconomic processes tended to bring together freely: the urban and the rural, one ethnicity and another" (Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 18, 28).

[34] Richard Rive & Tim Couzens. *Seme: Founder of the ANC* (Trenton: African World Press Inc., 1993), 9-10.

[35] Saul Dubow. *The African National Congress* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 2000), 6.

[36] Dubow, *The African National Congress,* 7.

African National Congress, but its methods would remain largely the same until the 1950s when protest politics began to gravitate toward a more mass-based approach.

As a young organization adhering to a South African liberal tradition, the legacy of the British Cape Colony that stressed patience and gradual progress, the ANC advocated reform over revolution. The early members of the ANC tended to hold dear the *amakholwa* values they acquired at mission schools, and their political strategies reflected this Christian tradition.[37] This orientation toward gradual progress would frustrate many younger activists in the coming decades, causing divisions within the liberation movements; however, this strategy of patience afforded the ANC a position of moral strength that would prove invaluable to the future struggle for liberation.[38] In the early years of the ANC, membership was typically made up of educated urban elites. Distant from rural Africans, both physically and psychologically, these urban elites believed in the value of European culture and customs and adopted an assimilationist attitude in the hopes of winning rights and freedom within the white state.[39] To these early members of the ANC, white liberals were key allies who could work through the

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[37] *Amakholwa* means "believer" in isiZulu and was the term used for African converts to Christianity. This conversion usually meant extensive contact with missionaries, along with which often came the adoption of European styles of dress and conduct.

[38] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 100.

[39] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 34. Halisi has noted in *Black Political Thought*, that "colonial systems that rewarded the cultural assimilation of elites, even while they continued to discriminate against the assimilated few, stimulated a form of black consciousness that never succumbed to the influence of multiracial liberalism" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought* , 47). A tangential comparison can be made here between Halisi's conclusions and those drawn by Benedict Anderson regarding the formation of "creole nationalism" in the Americas. Colonial functionaries born in the colony, to European parents, considered themselves European but were not accepted in the metropole. The collective experience of exclusion contributed to a common identity among these "creole pioneers" that led to the formation of new world nationalisms (See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 47-65). In the South African context, this black consciousness discussed by Halisi was interpreted and deployed in different ways by the assimilationist elites. In the case of Seme, he "saw racial solidarity as a means to extend the legal rights of Africans within a multiracial union" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 50).

legislative process to achieve political change. In 1926, the first president of the ANC, Rev. John L. Dube indicated this in a speech when he said that "race cooperation must be the watchword."[40] A huge blow to this concept occurred in 1935 and 1936 when white liberal politicians did nothing to defend African voters threatened with removal from the Cape Common Role.[41] Incidents like this inspired an emerging group of young African intellectuals to rebel against white liberal guidance in the mid-to-late 1940s. The role of white liberals and multiracial cooperation would become a sensitive issue as the ANC developed and implemented more proactive and aggressive strategies of resistance.[42] These issues persisted as causes of friction within the ANC until the more radical and aggressive activists split off to form the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1959.

The eventual division of the ANC would result from disagreements over tactics. In addition to multiracial alliances, the role of the masses in the liberation struggle caused disagreements within the ANC. Many intellectual elites who formed the ANC leadership were wary of mass participation and the African "agitator" was looked down upon.[43] In 1940 Dr. Alfred B. Xuma assumed the presidency of the ANC and, while certainly an

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[40] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 48. Halisi observed Dube's "relatively conservative version of black republicanism" and attributed this to the influence of Booker T. Washington. Dube "saw solidarity as a means to accomplish African redemption and racial uplift" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 50).

[41] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 37. Black South Africans who met property and educational requirements had been allowed electoral rights in the Cape Colony. This right to vote was stripped from all blacks in the Cape with the passage of the Hertzog legislation in 1936.

[42] Halisi states that "as the ANC shifted from petition to confrontation politics, younger nationalists began to find communist allies to be more reliable than liberals" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 76). This emerging alliance had potential strategic consequences regarding the nature of resistance to oppression in South Africa: was this oppression based upon race or class? Was the liberation of the worker or the black person the basis for struggle in South Africa? This debate within black liberation politics was hampered by state intervention through the Suppression of Communism Act, and the banning of the South African Communist Party (SACP), however, the underlying tensions remained taut and would resurface in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

[43] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 48.

"intellectual elite," he appreciated the importance of the ordinary African to any liberation struggle. Xuma and the ANC, perhaps inadvertently, took a step toward confrontational mass politics with the establishment of the Congress Youth League (CYL) in 1943-44. Elected as president of the Youth League was Anton Muziwakhe Lembede. Born in rural Natal province, Lembede's parents had made his education a priority when he was a child.[44] Heavily influenced by Roman Catholicism and his own austere roots, Lembede "disdained the cosmopolitan and sophisticated existence of black Johannesburg as evidence of moral degeneracy and cultural confusion."[45] Lembede would become the chief architect of the Africanist ideology that would guide the Youth League and its legendary members Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo.[46] Keenly aware of Afrikaner nationalism and the rise of European fascism, Lembede looked to these movements while he formulated his own sense of race consciousness.[47] The discipline and organization of these fascists groups impressed Lembede and accentuated the disorganization and factionalism of the ANC. The Africanist ideology that Lembede championed focused on the perceived power of orthodox African nationalism to galvanize the black population of South Africa into action. Orthodox African nationalism "defines South Africa as a country belonging to

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[44] No stranger to poverty, during his first three years at Adams College Lembede was described as the "living symbol of African misery" (Gerhart, *Black Power*, 51).
[45] Dubow, *The African National Congress*, 29.
[46] Lembede believed that African nationalism was rooted, not in the "usual building blocks of nationalism," color, language, or geographical proximity, but a "spiritual force he called 'Africanism'" (Halisis, *Black Political Thought*, 60). Lembede, together with his classmate from Adams College, Jordan Ngubane, authored the *Congress Youth League Manifesto* in 1944. This document "advanced an African-conscious program for unity and uplift as the basis of opposition to white supremacy" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 61).
[47] Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945*(New York: Longman Inc., 1987), 21; Robert R. Edgar and Luyanda ka Msumza eds., *Freedom in our Lifetime* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1996), 13.

Africans by right of first possession, and on the ground that they are the great majority of the population."[48] The Africanists saw all other races as guests of Africans who could remain in the country on African terms.[49] The potential of this articulate proponent of African nationalism was abruptly negated when Lembede died in 1947, after fewer than four years of political activity.[50] Following Lembede's death, Ashby Peter Mda assumed the role of Youth League president and proponent of a more radical strain of African nationalism within the ANC.

In 1949, the influence of the Youth League on the ANC leadership grew significantly with the election of "energetic Youth Leaguer" Walter Sisulu as Secretary General, and the adoption of the Youth League produced Programme of Action as a guiding document of the ANC.[51] The Programme reflected many of the desires of the younger generation of African leaders, non-collaboration with apartheid institutions, civil disobedience, mass action, and a "new strategy based on extra-legal tactics."[52] The Programme set the stage for the nationwide political action of the 1950s. The most

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[48] Gerhart, *Black Power,* 13; Edgar and Msumza eds., *Freedom in our Lifetime,* 91.
[49] Care should be taken here to note Halisi's clarification regarding the African nationalism of the Youth League: "most CYL members were uncomfortable with black racial chauvinism and acknowledged that African nationalism had 'two streams'; hence, the Manifesto specifically rejected- as ultra-revolutionary and too nativistic- the first stream, or Garveyite formulation that South Africa should be a country for none other than black Africans" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought,* 61).
[50] Gerhart, *Black Power,* 82.
[51] Gerhart, *Black Power,* 83.
[52] Ibid. Halisi describes the Youth Leaguers as "essentially populist thinkers who demanded that political leaders represent the will of the African people" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought,* 61). Halisi also draws a distinction between the ANC interpretation of "non-collaboration" and that of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). Halisi credits early NEUM intellectual Bennie Kies with "connecting the denial of democratic citizenship" to "labor exploitation." Under the guidance of Kies and others, the NEUM determined that the answer to racist Afrikaner nationalism "was the organization of a strong mass movement of non-European unity under the tutelage of a committed and self-sacrificing cadre of black intellectuals." Halisi accurately connects the NEUM to the laying of the "intellectual foundation of socialist populism" that would prove to be a powerful component of South African political organization in the late 1970s and 1980s.

significant protest of this period was the 1952 Defiance Campaign in which thousands of Africans, Indians, and Coloureds courted arrest across South Africa. This campaign failed to challenge the power of the Nationalist government, but it did boost the profile of the ANC, making it a legitimate national organization, and quadrupling its membership.[53] The Defiance Campaign was a major development in mass political action and multiracial alliance politics. The campaign also solidified the formation of the Congress Alliance which had been organized as a response to the repressive laws instituted in 1950. As "a multi-racial, ideologically heterodox and regionally representative confederation of extra-parliamentary opposition movements with the ANC at its centre," wrote Saul Dubow in *The African National Congress*, the Congress Alliance was "brought together by a common concern to liberate the mass of South Africans from increasing racial and class oppression."[54] The Congress Alliance and the Defiance Campaign reinforced the ANC's commitment to multiracial political cooperation; the pinnacle of which was the Congress of the People. Lasting two days and held on the open veld near Kliptown outside Johannesburg, the Congress of the People pulled together over 3,000 delegates representing Africans, Indians, Coloureds, and whites.[55] The purpose of the Congress of the People was to demonstrate the power of alliance politics and adopt "a powerful ten-point Freedom Charter which affirmed a host of liberal-democratic freedoms" including equality before the law, and the "right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their

[53] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 89; E.S. Reddy. "Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws- Recalled" *Asian Times*, 1986. http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?include=docs/arts/1987/defiance_recalled.html (accessed December 5, 2010).
[54] Dubow, *The African National Congress*, 37-38.
[55] Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, 71.

children."[56] This Freedom Charter would become a point of contention between the mainstream traditional ANC leadership and the more radical Africanists, such as Potlako Kitchener Leballo and other Youth Leaguers who had been active in the late 1940s. They viewed the Freedom Charter as a rejection of the Programme of Action.[57] The Africanist critique was that the Freedom Charter mischaracterized the African struggle as "'the people' against 'a system'" rather than the "dispossessed versus dispossessors."[58] The Africanists felt that the Freedom Charter had portrayed the black South African's enemy as "racialism and not white South Africa."[59] This was a severe blow to the Africanists who saw race as a potential factor of political unification, and felt that white fear of "the just wrath of the Africans" was a useful social and political asset.[60] The Freedom Charter served to exacerbate the existing tensions between multiracial unionist and black republicans within the ANC.

"We don't care about chiefs! ...We want Duke, Satchmo, and hot dames! ... Tell us what's happening right here, on the Reef": the urban cosmopolitanism of *Drum*[61]

It is in the context of the emerging polarity between black republicanism and multiracial unionism and a shift from petition politics to confrontational civil-disobedience that the focus of this chapter moves to engage Chapman's proposal to treat

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[56] Dubow, *The African National Congress*, 51; The Freedom Charter, http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?include=docs/misc/1955/charter.html (accessed December 5, 2010).
[57] Of critical importance to the Africanists was the statement that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white." From the Africanist perspective, South Africa belonged to its oldest inhabitants, whose prerogative it was to invite others to share their land and country (Gerhart, *Black Power*, 157-58; The Freedom Charter, http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?include=docs/misc/1955/charter.html (accessed December 5, 2010).
[58] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 158.
[59] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 159.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 187.

the writing of *Drum* as a "social barometer."[62] Throughout its first decade in print, *Drum* would undergo significant changes. After just four issues, the apolitical declaration made by Crisp in his introductory editorial was challenged by a reader. In the Opinion section of the July/August issue of 1951, Crisp responded to a letter questioning how a magazine that eschewed political discussion could possibly claim to represent all black South Africans. Crisp responded by calling for the formation of a "cultural brotherhood," asking "is it not possible that art and literature and cultural development can exert a tremendous pressure on political events...are Africans certain that the only way to advancement is by political agitation and destructive propaganda?"[63] From his writing, it appears that Crisp envisioned his magazine as an oasis in what *Drum* writer Lewis Nkosi described as the "cultural desert" of Johannesburg.[64] Nkosi's assessment of Johannesburg paralleled Lembede's view of the moral degeneration taking place within African cities. As a result of this degeneration, "Africans had become a derelict nation, uncertain of their cultural identity, their rights or their place in relation to the rest of mankind."[65] Lembede saw this cultural uncertainty as a root cause of the cosmopolitan idolization of white culture he witnessed among many urban Africans.[66]

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[62] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 185.
[63] *Drum* 1, no. 5 (Jul./Aug. 1951): 3. With these questions, Crisp seems to be anticipating the apartheid censors' reactions to black writing in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as Steve Biko's emphasis on culture as a an important dimension of the liberation struggle. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in the later chapters on *New Classic* and *Staffrider*.
[64] Lewis Nkosi. *Home and Exile* (London: Longman, Green and Co. Ltd., 1965), 19.
[65] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 58. Jordan Ngubane, Lembede's co-author of the *Youth League Manifesto*, held similar views, writing that "the masses of the city are lost souls. Men who have broken with land and thus with nature. The true African and the authentic African revolution will come from those simple men who have not lost contact with the soil or the African way" (Halisi, 50).
[66] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 58.

Lembede's solution to this problem was to develop a cultural nationalism; "a reorientation toward the present, rather than a backward-looking longing for the quaint customs of some idealized past."[67] Through this process, the imitative attitudes of the urban African elites could be abandoned for a more balanced "process of growth and change founded on the conscious selection of those foreign elements which could be most beneficially adapted to Africa's own cultural foundations."[68] Lembede's description of the creation of a cultural nationalism resembles Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz's concept of transculturation. In *Rewriting Modernity*, David Attwell succinctly describes this as the multiple processes through which a marginalized group appropriates elements of a foreign culture as portions of their indigenous culture are destroyed.[69] He acknowledges that this transcultural relationship is an uneven exchange that can be a jarring and even violent process.[70] Lembede never articulated a concrete plan for the development of this cultural nationalism, and as a result no coherence or uniformity of action was achieved among Africanists. The different approaches to the development of a cultural nationalism stemmed from the divergent views of what interpretation of *the present* South African culture should be reoriented toward. Here again a distinction can be drawn between the traditionally liberal-minded ANC and the more radical Africanists driven by the ideas of Lembede and Mda. In 1945, *Ilanga lase*

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[67] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 201. Here Lembede seems to be foreshadowing Frantz Fanon's writing on the colonial tendency to arrest cultural development and transform a culture into a collection of customs devoid of any real meaning or power. The importance of the present to Lembede and Fanon would be seized upon by later *Staffrider* writers in the 1970s as they sought to harness the power of literature and culture in service to the liberation struggle.
[68] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 64.
[69] David Attwell, *Rewriting Modernity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 20.
[70] Attwell, *Rewriting Modernity*, 17-21.

Natal featured an article by Lembede which called on Africans to "commemorate the glorious achievements of our great heroes of the past e.g. Shaka, Moshoeshoe, Hintsa, Sikhukhuni, Khama, Sobhuza, Mozilikazi etc."[71] Lembede's Africanism characterized the historic resistance to white domination as a unifying element for Africans and a continuous struggle which could serve to link the past to the present. The Africanists cherished the rural setting in which these heroic historical figures existed as more purely African, free from the taint of colonialism or industrialization. More than simply a setting for heroic African resistance to white domination, Lembede believed that the rural social structure was crucial to the proper development of African youth; physically, psychologically, and socially.[72] The writers of *Drum*, typically situated more firmly in the traditional ANC camp, differed from the Africanists in that they were not as enamored with so-called "traditional" African culture, and were open to European and American influences in the development of a modern, urban South African culture. Many *Drum* writers displayed a varying mix of animosity and admiration toward their rural heritage and tended to be more internationally oriented in their literary style, drawing inspiration from black American writers and Hollywood gangster figures. These influences are evident in the various characters that appeared in the stories of *Drum*.

In the first few months of publication in 1951, *Drum* seemed to adopt the Africanist approach to cultural development, featuring sections entitled "Music of the

[71] Edgar & Msumza eds., *Freedom in our Lifetime*, 85.
[72] Benedict Carton, "Fount of Deep Culture: Legacies of the *James Stuart Archive* in South African Historiography." *History in Africa* 30 (2003): 1-20. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3172083 (accessed December 4, 2010), 11-14.

Tribes," "Tribal Folklore," and "Know Yourselves" (histories of the Bantu tribes).[73] This embrace of cultural heritage and history would seem to be a natural feature of a magazine designed to promote cultural expression; however, Crisp was unable to cope with a problem unique to South Africa; the focus on tribal heritage was seen by urban Africans as evidence of "the white hand."[74] The United Party policies of stewardship had been premised on the perceived primitivism of black South Africans who were considered too tribal to run a modern state. Jan Smuts and the South Africa Party government had merely been ruling South Africa until Africans were "developed" enough to manage their own affairs.[75] Re-tribalization was thus an anathema to many urban South Africans and interpreted as a way to maintain the status quo of white dominance. Crisp was replaced as editor of *Drum* in November, 1951 by Anthony Sampson, a young British man with no experience in Africa or magazine publishing.[76] This transition from Crisp to Sampson precipitated a change in the appearance and content of *Drum*. However, despite his short tenure as editor, Crisp's statement of purpose for *Drum* was significant in reinforcing the blueprint laid out by the 1949 Programme of Action which advocated uniting "the cultural with the educational and national struggle."[77] *Drum* took a step in this direction by elevating urban popular culture through a focus on the achievements of African athletes, artists, and beauty queens. Indirectly, Lembede, the Programme, and *Drum* all

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[73] Anthony Sampson, *Drum* (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1956), 15.
[74] Sampson, *Drum*, 20-21; Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 187.
[75] Aran S. MacKinnon, *The Making of South Africa* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 185.
[76] Sampson, *Drum*, 22. Chapman describes the move from Crisp to Sampson as a prudent business decision by owner Jim Bailey, who was losing £2,000 a month printing *Drum*. Chapman considered Sampson's "fascination and sympathy for the African world he saw around him, especially in Sophiatown," to be of more value than any newspaper experience (Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 187).
[77] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 200.

gravitated toward the development of a form of cultural nationalism that could be harnessed as a force for social and political change.

Drum's **foray into "a reading world which hadn't developed any definite magazine taste"**[78]

During its first decade in print, *Drum* placed a heavy emphasis on South African literature. In *Drum's* first two years of publication, Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* and Peter Abrahams' *Wild Conquest* were serialized and short stories became a regular feature of the magazine until 1958. While many scholarly studies of *Drum* (including this one) use the phrase "*Drum* writers" or "*Drum* School" to refer to the black South African literary vanguard that included Es'kia Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi, Nat Nakasa, and Bloke Modisane, many of the people who submitted stories to *Drum* were writing fiction for the first time. From 1952 until 1958, *Drum* held yearly short story contests and received thousands of submissions from their readers.[79] As one of the first outlets for African creative writing, *Drum* magazine marked the inception of African popular literary expression. In his study of apartheid era censorship, Peter McDonald writes that by the mid-1950s, *Drum* "had become the product of a collaboration between a new generation of interventionist black journalists and aspirant short-story writers, who, together with the magazine's first white editors…created a format, and welcomed

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[78] Es'kia Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1971), 188. In this autobiographical account of his youth in South Africa, Mphahlele writes that he encouraged his editors to allot space for "healthy material in an original style whenever possible and, in a sense, dictate what the public should read, without necessarily being snobbish or intellectual." The response Mphahlele received was that this was not "*Drum's* mission."

[79] Dorothy Woodson, *Drum an Index* (Madison: African Studies Program University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1988), 8.

contributions, that blurred distinctions among campaigning journalism, social commentary and fiction, traditional and modern, serious and popular kinds of writing."[80]

This type of writing may excite the sociologist or the historian, but for the student of literature, many of these stories fall flat in their formulaic reliance on realism that borders on journalism or autobiography. Michael Chapman has described the reluctance with which Es'kia Mphahlele approached the task assigned him as fiction editor of *Drum* in 1955.[81] Mphahlele himself referred to "the tyranny of place, the tyranny of time" as an explanation for the creation of this journalistic-fiction.[82] As the fiction editor, Mphahlele had to "compromise" "between writing as self-expression and as objective reporting of the social scene."[83] In his discussion of Can Themba, winner of the short story contest of 1953 and later assistant editor of *Drum*, Chapman validates Mphahlele's view of the "tyranny of place," suggesting "the importance of resisting any separation of the story telling imagination from the social terrain…the one interacts with the other."[84] This interaction is what allowed Chapman to consider the *Drum* collection of short stories a tool with which he could gauge tensions within South African society.[85] In this fiction, the reality of urban life in 1950s South Africa is interwoven with the imagination of the author; their perceptions of the past and present compete for space with their hopes for the future. Reading this social barometer is not as simple as reading the news articles in

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[80] Peter McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and its Cultural Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 118.
[81] Michael Chapman, *Southern African Literatures* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2003), 240.
[82] Es'kia Mphahlele, *Es'kia* (Johannesburg: Kwela Books, 2002), 281. "Experience and the place that contains it," Mphahlele wrote, "the tyranny of it…the politics of education, the campaigning, the voices of protest."
[83] Mphahlele, *Es'kia*, 281.
[84] Michael Chapman, *Art Talk, Politics Talk* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2006), 48.
[85] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 185.

Drum and counting the number of arrests in the Defiance Campaign, or reading Henry Nxumalo's exposés on the Bethel Farms or The Fort (a notorious Johannesburg prison) and reflecting upon the injustice of the apartheid system as illustrated by these reports. As Gail Gerhart has observed, these short stories reflect a deeper tension within black South African communities: feelings of social alienation and emerging generational schisms that accompanied the breakup of families and the migrations of people in response to the rapid industrialization and urbanization of South Africa in the early twentieth century. These movements, often from rural habitats to urban ones, were interpreted in various ways by different writers as they embraced their pasts and evaluated their present as distinct individuals. These stories reflect what the average black resident had to confront in the South African urban setting, home to "a gun-crazy police force and knife-happy African thugs."[86] The insecurity is palpable in these stories; crime, alcohol abuse, and financial destitution are all regularly occurring themes.

Dorothy Woodson, who has compiled an invaluable index of *Drum*, has stated that the fiction of this magazine was "rarely didactic," and one-time editor, Mphahlele has said that "the imaginative writing courted no political confrontation."[87] However, it

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[86] Nkosi, *Home and Exile*, 19.

[87] Woodson, *Drum an Index*, 7; Mphahlele, *Es'kia*, 308. This statement by Mphahlele was taken from a paper he presented at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1980. It is quite possible that Mphahlele judged the politicization of *Drum* in comparison to the revolutionary Soweto poetry and the radical writing of *Staffrider*, a magazine that will be discussed in chapter seven and to which he contributed. This conclusion is plausible because Mphahlele contradicts his own statement only a few sentences later: "the black writer was asserting his sense of permanence in an urban ghetto life where he was being told he was a mere migrant worker with no hope for security of tenure in his municipal box-house." The creation of a "township culture" to which Mphahlele refers is exactly what the apartheid state was trying to combat through the destruction of Sophiatown. Mphahlele, in addition to other commentators, has linked *Drum* to the vibrancy of Sophiatown, and since this infamous black freehold was a threat to apartheid segregation then surely the magazine that carried on the polyglot, multiracial spirit of this dynamic community was dangerous as well.

is a contention of this chapter that these short stories were both didactic and politically confrontational, albeit to a lesser degree than the writing that would follow in the 1970s and 1980s. In a 1982 article written for *Staffrider* magazine, Richard Rive surveyed black writing in South Africa and classified *Drum* fiction as "protest writing," which he described as "writing by Blacks describing their situation to Whites whom they felt had the power to effect change." "Such an approach," Rive observed, "was essentially a negative one, a literature about victimisation."[88] Michael Chapman's analysis, in *Art Talk, Politics Talk*, of Can Themba's writing can be applied to many of the *Drum* writers, and contradicts Rive's description of *Drum* writing as negative. These "works do not necessarily always address political activity directly," Chapman suggests, "but elicit forms of desire, admiration, and critical recognition that can motivate efforts to produce social change."[89] These short stories can be viewed as urban parables, dictating the rules of black urban living to any so naïve as to be unaware and providing examples in character form of correct and incorrect actions. In laying out these rules, the stories indirectly indict the apartheid state for creating a situation which bred such deplorable

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[88] Richard Rive, "Books by Black Writers" *Staffrider* 5, no. 1 (1982): 12-15. Rive's description of *Drum* fiction as "protest writing" was taken up by many later critics of South African literature. The conclusions drawn in the rest of this chapter regarding the didactic nature of some *Drum* stories challenges this notion of the intended audience for this fiction. The personnel change noted above, from Crisp to Sampson, indicates that Jim Bailey was responding to the desires of his intended, black, audience. Additionally, Mphahlele has stated that "*Drum* was publishing stuff that appealed to a black proletarian readership" (Mphahlele, *Es'kia*, 308). Perhaps the most significant pieces of evidence that can indicate the intended audience of *Drum* are the advertisements that saturate the publication. Chapman has noted that the advertisements "ranged from improve-yourself correspondence courses to skin-lightening creams" (Chapman, *Southern African Literatures*, 238). Despite the fact that *Drum* was a business venture (for profit), it is still shocking to see, in such a heralded African magazine, advertisements that blatantly manipulate black insecurities regarding employment, beauty, and family stability. While these points may provide the basis for questioning Rive's conclusions about the intended audience of *Drum*, any data relating to readership must be compiled from the memoirs and personal accounts of those who participated in the *Drum* venture because these records were lost as the *Drum* and *Golden City Post* offices moved over the years.

[89] Chapman, *Art Talk, Politics Talk*, 56.

conditions for urban Africans. By glorifying the crafty tsotsi and shebeen queen, *Drum* promoted a new image of African power, born in the moral wilderness of South African cities and existing outside the parameters set by the white state. By promoting a cosmopolitan multiracial lifestyle, these writers directly challenged the apartheid system and the position of the Africanists within the ANC. The short stories of *Drum* portrayed the insecurities that accompanied urban South African life in a manner that leaves the impression of authors desperate for the comforts of community. While Rive is correct in stating that the observational fiction of *Drum* illuminated social deficiencies, one may assume that the ultimate goal was not simply to create a record for posterity's sake, or to appeal to whites for assistance, but to stimulate thought, reflection, and discussion among black readers which could in turn lead to action.

"He had pitted his love of the land and quiet against the progress, sophistication, and apparent wealth of that large city…to his cost": Tradition, modernity, *Jim*, and *Jo-burg*[90]

As Peter McDonald has observed, *Drum* was a "key forum" in which "young black writers" began to "articulate new ideas of a modern, urbanized African culture, explicitly rejecting the atavistic tribalist fantasies of apartheid."[91] McDonald's conclusion should be considered in the context of Halisi's and Mahmood Mamdani's analysis of citizenship in South Africa. Halisi establishes the poles of multiracial unionism and black republicanism, while Mamdani's spectrum stretches from an urban

[90] *Drum* 1, no. 4 (June, 1951): 49.
[91] McDonald, 25. McDonald's somewhat overly inclusive statement above is certainly accurate when considering the examples of the most famous *Drum* writers, Es'kia Mphahlele, Can Themba, Lewis Nkosi, Nat Nakasa, Todd Matshikiza, and Bloke Modisane. However, as discussed above, these were not the only authors published in *Drum*. It appears that many of the other contributors were wrestling with a desire to abandon a traditional rural lifestyle but were not entirely comfortable with the wholesale adoption of a cosmopolitan urban life.

civil organization to the authority of rural tradition. It is tempting, and at times accurate, to align these polarities, overlaying multiracial unionism with an urban concept of civil codes and placing black republicanism in the rural countryside. However, in reality, black South Africans adapted, both physically and psychologically, to the exigencies of a life that was pressurized by the apartheid system. This fluidity is evident in the various ways the urban and rural environments were portrayed in the *Drum* short stories.

Two examples of stories that embody McDonald's belief in *Drum's* rejection of tribalism appear early in the publication. "The Cup was Full" was written by a West African, C.O.D. Ekwensi, and "Nqangela's Defeat" was written by A.Z.T. Mbebe. In "The Cup was Full," Bolarin is a wealthy man with many wives, but his superior, old Oba has died and tradition requires Bolarin to commit suicide in Oba's tomb.[92] Bolarin expresses his dismay at the situation to his young lover Ayoke, and the narrator states the obvious, "he was caught in a trap of superstition, tradition, [and] custom."[93] Just as Bolarin is about to hang himself, the police, acting on a tip from Ayoke, arrive and stop him. "The end of this will be good for us both," Ayoke assures Bolarin.[94] The message of this story is clear even without the narrator's intrusion; a better life awaits the African who is able to determine for himself when to embrace modernity and discard the yoke of tradition and superstition. "Nqangela's Defeat" delivers a similar message in the form of

[92] *Drum* 1, no. 5 (July/Aug. 1951): 13.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid. It is somewhat logical that the harbinger of modernity in this story is a young person; that it is a woman is a bit surprising. Ayoke has the courage to defy tradition when her older lover does not. This type of protagonist, an assertive youth, will become much more popular thirty years later in *Staffrider* stories.

a Christian morality tale.[95] Reverend Mzimba is a preacher at a mission station in the Transkei who has been challenged to a contest of power by Nqangela, a great herbalist who has become angry at the growing number of Christian converts in the area. As Nqangela stands on a hill just about to hurl his spear at Mzimba, a bolt of lightning strikes Nqangela down. When Nqangela recovers, he converts to Christianity. The narrator summarizes, "the defeat of Nqangela had meant the defeat of the dark forces which lead men astray."[96] "The Cup was Full" and "Nqangela's Defeat" are explicit rejections of traditional ways; Mbebe offers Christianity as the path to the future while Ekwensi suggests individual autonomy as a way out of the "trap" of tradition and custom.

Regardless of the opinions of these authors, the alternative to traditional ways had already been determined by the rich mineral resources of South Africa itself and the labor demands of large-scale extraction. Heavy industrialization during the World War II years had fundamentally altered the structure and organization of South African social life. Massive numbers of Africans, many displaced by white farmers, migrated toward cities in search of work and what they perceived to be a better life than that which they could scratch out on the poor quality land they were allowed to keep.[97] Between the years of 1939 and 1952, the African urban population almost doubled.[98] This move toward the cities was a socially disruptive process, and as noted above, Lembede and many other Africanists saw this movement into the decadent urban environment as a factor in the

[95] *Drum* 2, no. 3 (Mar. 1952): 10-11.
[96] *Drum* 2, no. 3 (Mar. 1952): 11.
[97] Philip Bonner; Peter Delius; Deborah Posel eds. *Apartheid's Genesis*, 100.
[98] Lodge, 11.

destruction of an African identity.[99] Lacking the certainty of this prominent Africanist, the writers of *Drum* exhibit a love-hate relationship with African cities in many of their short stories. "Ah Pretoria! Beautiful, cruel, cold-hearted city!...it has killed me, torn out my heart and trampled on it. But I still love it…darker…darker."[100] This conflicted sentiment was not at all out of the place on the pages of *Drum*.

Confronted with Mamdani's Janus-faced bifurcated state, some *Drum* writers expressed their uncertainties through a style of story called: *Jim Comes to Jo-burg*, the name borrowed from a 1950s film.[101] Lewis Nkosi sketched the basic structure of this story as the innocent African's transition from the tightly knit tribal community to the lonely hustle and bustle of urban existence: "Jim's disaffiliation from the tribe in favour of the self-seeking individualistic ethos of urban life, we were made to understand, was tantamount to Jim's loss of manhood." Nkosi stated that Jim's move toward the city "was the main cause rather than the result of the nation's tragedy." [102] From this simple framework consisting of three basic characters: the city, the countryside, and the African, a multiplicity of variations were constructed to represent the particular attitude of the author. The countryside and the city often served as opposite poles, and could be used to represent the past and the present (or future), or tradition and modernity. The variations of this *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* theme provide the reader with insights to the author's interpretation of black South Africans' present in relation to their past and at times, their potential future. Almost all of the authors of these types of stories acknowledge the

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[99] Bonner, Delius, Poser eds., 11.
[100] Sam Mokgalendi, "Blood Between Us" *Drum* 2, no. 8 (Sept. 1952): 26-28.
[101] Nkosi, 4.
[102] Nkosi, 5.

"moral degeneracy" of urban life; the differences appear when the characters interact with this dangerous environment.

The *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* theme is presented in a heartbreaking manner by E. Rehzi in "Tomorrow Never Came."[103] Rehzi opens the story with Mopo, alone and lonely in his kraal three years after his grandson Jamie left for Johannesburg, "a city of poverty and wealth; a city of joy and sorrows; a city of love and hate; a city of light – a city of even darker shadows."[104] Mopo is able to put himself to sleep each night with the thought that Jamie will return tomorrow. The story then transitions to Johannesburg where Jamie is drunk with his arm around his girl. Wondering if his grandfather lives, Jamie feels ashamed of what he has become in the city. He laments losing everything, especially his self-respect, and he hopes that his grandfather is dead because, the reader is left to infer, Jamie himself is spiritually and emotionally dead. The loyalty of the grandfather who raised Jamie as a son is sharply contrasted with the selfishness of the grandson. Jamie's financial destitution pales in comparison to the blow his honor sustained when he broke the bonds of generational obligation for the lure of "the golden city."

Two months later, another *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* story was published in *Drum*. "Duma Comes Home," written by D.G. Tsebe, would more accurately be labeled a *Jim Escapes from Jo-burg* story.[105] In it, Duma returns to Natal from Johannesburg where he worked to earn money to pay his *lobolo* (bridewealth). Arriving home, he discards his

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[103] *Drum* 2, no. 2 (Feb. 1952): 23.
[104] Kraal is the Afrikaans word for a cattle enclosure. It was often used as a term for a homestead as well.
[105] *Drum* 2, no. 4 (Apr. 1952): 36-37.

Johannesburg name as well as his city clothes. Donning his tribal garb, Duma sets off to find Thokozile who had promised to save herself for his return. Scooping up his bride, Duma carries her to meet his father who beams with pride in his son. In "Duma Comes Home," Tsebe has woven an anti-urban tale which glorifies the rural setting, personified by the virtuous woman and proud father.

This idea of liberation from the vice of city life was not unique to the early years of *Drum*. "The Way of the Prodigal," written by Ritchie Maber, won *Drum's* short story contest and appeared in May 1957.[106] The narrator begins by questioning if wantonness, vice, poverty, and disease are golden; if so then Johannesburg's nickname "The Golden City" is appropriate.[107] David, the son of a priest in Zululand, has recently been released from jail after serving a sentence for murder. David had been incarcerated because one night in a Johannesburg shebeen, David killed a white man who attacked David and his companion because they appeared to be "educated kaffirs" and offended the sensibilities of the drunken white man. Sent to prison, David received a copy of the New Testament, and as he read the book, he became homesick, yearning for kraals and the open sky. During his readings, David begins to draw parallels between himself and the prodigal son; the reader is left anticipating David's joyous return to Zululand.[108] Heavily influenced by Christianity, "The Way of the Prodigal" contrasts the city with home. The

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[106] *Drum*, no. 75 (May 1957): 51-55.
[107] *Drum*, no. 75 (May 1957): 53. Maber's style here foreshadows the tendency of *Staffrider* writers to interject with a seemingly omniscient narrator's commentary that does not always relate directly to the story. In the 1970s these interjections would become more common and politicized.
[108] "The Way of the Prodigal" is an incredible story for Maber's complete neglect of any critical engagement of David's predicament. Rather than commenting on the obvious fact that this violent drunk white man has acted with total impunity, Maber places the responsibility to change with David. By returning to Zululand, David has surrendered the urban areas to the violence of white dominance.

implication of this story is that the urban setting is not the place for Africans, or at least moral Africans.[109]

A progressive variation of *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* is that *Jim* succeeds in the city and has a better life than he would in the countryside. Two examples of this story appear in January and March of 1952. "Farm Boy" was written by E.A.P. Sixaba and "Ntombo Gets a Job" by Douglas Sidayiya. In "Farm Boy," Makhaya Mahlathi is a Xhosa farmer in the Eastern Cape who considers the people working in town to be fools for abandoning the rural lifestyle.[110] This is until Mahlathi needs *lobolo*, which his father says Mahlathi must earn on his own.[111] Once in town, Mahlathi encounters all the typical problems of

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[109] Another interesting variation of the *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* theme appears in the April 1958 issue. The evaluation of city and country is less clear in Owen Williams' "Sweepstake Winner" (*Drum*, no. 86, 61-63). This is the story of Jan Matthys and his son Dick who moved to Cape Town after having an argument with his father. The last Jan heard of Dick, he was running with a gang in District Six and mixed up in the *dagga* (marijuana) and drink that accompany gang life. Jan spends his days fishing and lying in the shade on the side of his hut during the mid-day heat. One day he received a letter from Dick which Jan promptly threw away, assuming that it was a notice of Dick's parole from jail. When Dick arrives home a few days later he eagerly asks about the sweepstake ticket worth thousands of pounds that he had mailed home prior to his departure from Cape Town. When Jan hears of his mistake his response is indifference: "the sun and the snoek are still good" (63). "Sweepstake winner" is a story of return that differs markedly from "Duma Comes Home" and "The Way of the Prodigal." Duma and David return home eager to be rid of the taint of the city. Duma was able to survive the trials of urban life in order to earn the money he needed while David had to pay for his urban adventure with jail time. Once these two have fulfilled their obligation to the city, they head for the comfort of home and the promise of a better life. While not much is revealed about Dick's experience in the city, aside from the rumors of a life of crime, he returns home triumphant, expecting his sweepstake ticket to have preceded his arrival and proven his worth to his parents. Instead what Dick finds is that his ignorant father has thrown away a mountain of potential wealth. Jan's response is essentially a rejection of the materialistic modern lifestyle. Has Williams presented a critique of the parochial rural African who thwarts development and progress, or is this an exposition of the frivolousness of excess material accumulation? Regardless of what Williams intended or what the reader constructs the meaning to be, "Sweepstakes Winner" illustrates the tension between the urban and rural and all that these two can represent.

[110] *Drum* 2, no. 1 (Jan 1952): 17.

[111] Sixaba's story is an early appearance of the generational tensions that become a more significant theme in the later magazines of this study. Often, in reality, the situation was reversed in which sons chose to enter the wage labor force in order to free themselves from parental authority and gain the financial independence necessary to control their own future and become a head of a household.

Jim, but has the good fortune to be hired as a gardener for a white man.[112] After saving enough for *lobolo*, Mahlathi gets a wife and his employer gives him a new suit for the wedding. Under this benevolent *baas* (boss or master), Mahlathi has learned English as well as how to be honest and faithful to his employer. Mahlathi is so pleased he vows to keep his job until his son can take his place.[113] "Farm Boy" is a direct response to the *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* stories that depicted urban life as an unwinnable conflict.[114] Mahlathi proves that through tenacity and hard work, it is possible to overcome the problems of the city and embrace the wealth and happiness it can offer, though the reader may rightfully question whether Mahlathi needed to become a wage laborer in order to learn honesty and faithfulness. The influence of the liberal doctrine urging assimilation of European values is heavy in "Farm Boy."

The *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* variety of short story is not very inventive, but the basic structure of this theme allows authors great flexibility to voice their perception of *the present* as experienced by the urban African. Whether their character experiences

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[112] Mahlathi only speaks isiXhosa and thus has a limited capacity for communication. He has no letter of recommendation from a previous employer making it incredibly difficult to secure a job. This places him at the mercy of a cunning isiXhosa-speaking "headhunter" who offers to find Mahlathi a job, for a "small fee."

[113] *Drum* 2, no. 1 (Jan 1952): 17.

[114] "Ntombo Gets a Job" is another progressive story about *Jim's* redemption in the city (*Drum* 2, no. 3, 23). Ntombo had followed the path of the archetypal *Jim*, falling into a life of crime in Johannesburg. He wants to return to the countryside for a fresh start but doesn't have the money to make the trip. Ntombo applies for a job as a waiter and when he arrives for the interview, the manager recognizes him but cannot place his face. Ntombo remembers that he had stolen the manager's bike a few months ago. Ntombo gets the job but is terrified to report for work the next morning because he thinks the manager will have remembered this crime and the police will be lying in wait. Ntombo tries to get some quick cash by robbing a store so he can skip town that night but his plan falls through. Ntombo resigns himself to his fate, but when he arrives at work the manager has a huge grin on his face. He thinks Ntombo is a bartender that used to work at another restaurant who made great drinks. With this new job Ntombo is able to abandon his former ways and begin to live a moral life. "Ntombo Gets a Job" is another type of response to the anti-urban *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* tale. With perseverance and a little luck Ntombo has beaten the decadence of city life and begins to reap its reward.

success or failure in the city depends very much on the outlook of the authors and whether they believe that the future of South Africa as a nation lies in the modernity of the urban setting, the traditional roots of rural Africa, or somewhere in between. These observational stories are not typically explicit with their message; rather they construct characters that mimic the exploits and experiences of urban residents and are excellent examples of how the realism so prevalent in the fiction of *Drum* was deployed as social commentary.

"What would Africa be if some of her ruthless children were not killed?": Negotiating the violence and insecurity of the city on the pages of *Drum*[115]

The realism of the *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* stories has been identified by Don Dodson as one of four modes of protest writing that appear in *Drum*.[116] While the short stories of *Drum* in the 1950s feature Dodson's other modes: romance, irony, and humor, the mode most heavily relied upon is realism.[117] The predominance of this style may be attributable to Nkosi's and Mphahlele's proposal, that life moved at such a rapid rate in urban South Africa that writers were often forced to simply relate their experiences and impressions of events to the readers. T.T. Moyana has perceptively observed that another "difficulty for the creative artist in South Africa, especially the black writer, is that life

[115] *Drum* 4, no. 4 (April 1954): 40.
[116] Don Dodson, "The Four Modes of Drum: Popular Fiction and Social Control in South Africa." *African Studies Review* 17, no. 2 (Sept. 1974). www.jstor.org/stable/523635 (accessed December 4, 2010). Dodson's analysis covers the period of 1960-1965, but his conclusions bear consideration in the context of the 1950s.
[117] While realism is the predominant style of these stories, it should be noted that the writers and their characters are not rigidly rooted in the present. These writers, through their characters and at time directly through the words of a narrator, explore their pasts and imagine their futures. When they do so, the reader catches a glimpse of how these writers of the 1950s interpret the realities of South African urban life.

itself is too fantastic to be outstripped by the creative imagination."[118] Even the most ridiculous Kafkaesque situations simply mirrored the complex reality of black life under apartheid in South Africa. Dodson takes issue with the realism of *Drum* writing because it is descriptive rather than analytical. Realism, to the reader, "does not help him cope with the environment," Dodson states, "that is something he must do on his own. With other modes of popular writing, the reader can be much more passive."[119] If this is taken as truth, then it should be no surprise that the writers of *Drum* chose this mode. The time to be passive had ended. The 1950s were a decade of political activity. Beginning with the Defiance Campaign in 1952, popular participation had become a concern of both the traditional leadership of the ANC and the more radical Africanists. No African political organization was advocating passive acceptance of the status quo; they differed on the nature of activism, but not on its importance to the liberation struggle. The 1950s can be seen as a decade of literary activism as well. *Drum's* yearly short story competition stimulated literary expression across a wide swath of the population; many of these emerging writers wrote about the problems and issues that were most urgent in their daily lives. As many of these black writers shared common experiences of oppression and racial discrimination that created deep seated feelings of insecurity, they gravitated toward the style of realism in their writing, often producing works that were indistinguishable from autobiography.

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[118] Njabulo Ndebele, *South Africa Literature and Culture: Rediscovery of the Ordinary* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), 42.

[119] Dodson, 320. One should question how passive a black reader could be, reading stories that accurately depict scenarios and situations intimately familiar to him or her. The fear, frustration, and excitement of these stories would resonate with a reader who could identify with the experiences that generated such intense emotions.

Dodson's belief was that readers became frustrated with realism because the author did not illustrate cause and effect, nor did the author instruct the readers on how to improve their environment. Njabulo Ndebele offers an answer to this with his discussion of spectacle in South African literature, "Where is causality? Such questions are irrelevant. Subtlety is avoided: what is intended is spectacular demonstration at all costs. What matters is what is seen. Thinking is secondary to seeing. Subtlety is secondary to obviousness."[120] In describing daily life in South Africa to the reader who experienced it first-hand, the writer need not describe the underlying causes of social decay and exploitation when these causes were paraded about by the state as law and order. Dodson cites two examples in *Drum* of realism which lacks an analytical dimension. "Mita" and "The Urchin" appeared in March and April of 1963, written by Casey Motsisi and Can Themba respectively. While these two stories fall outside the scope of consideration of this chapter, these writers are important contributors to *Drum* and *The Classic*, and the stories they wrote in the 1960s are relevant to this discussion of the *Drum* stories of the 1950s. "Mita" is the story of a man whose wife has just given birth. Leaving the house to buy cigarettes one night, he runs into some friends and goes out for a drink. Returning home later that night, he is waylaid by several tsotsis who stab him and rifle through his pockets. The man dies thinking about his newborn baby. In "The Urchin," a gang of young street toughs in Sophiatown rumble with the Berliners, a rival gang. Afterwards it is rumored that a Berliner was killed in the fight, and that the young Berliners are seeking help from the older Berliners. It is also said that the police will be visiting each of the

[120] Ndebele, *South Africa Literature and Culture*, 46.

boys at home that night. The main character, Macala hides in a warehouse yard overnight while his mother looks for him. Dodson concludes from "Mita" that the story "makes no attempt to seek causes or to place blame. Insofar as it does treat causality, the blame is psychological rather than social."[121] In Dodson's opinion, "The Urchin" "illuminates human emotion instead of social causality. The only culprit is human nature."[122]

It is difficult to see how Dodson has reached these conclusions. Ndebele has drawn attention to the obviousness that should be noted in these two stories. Neither Motsisi nor Themba need to elucidate the relationship between poverty and crime; likewise they need not discuss the myriad of Acts and Laws passed by the Nationalist government which functioned to institutionalize poverty among the African population. These connections should have been well known to the readers of *Drum*, as well as to a critic familiar with the social/political situation in South Africa during the 1950s and 1960s. If the setting of "Mita" were New York or Chicago, it would be absurd to say that "personal weakness (drink) explains the tragedy more than society does."[123] While Dodson does make an interesting point about alcohol abuse, though he misdiagnoses it as an individual problem. Alcohol is featured prominently in the short stories of *Drum* as

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[121] Dodson, 332-333.
[122] Dodson, 335.
[123] Dodson, 333. Dodson's conclusions here are somewhat surprising. It is odd that he does not interrogate the legally imposed social structure before placing responsibility on the individual's attributes. A person should be able to venture out after dark without worrying about his/her personal safety. Even more so, a person should be able to have a drink in the privacy and safety of his/her own home rather than having to visit an illegal shebeen. Clearly, the death of the new father is more the result of his skin color and social status than his personal taste for alcohol.

well as in news articles like "Boozers Beware" and "Shebeen Cocktails are Murder."[124] To call alcohol abuse personal weakness when it affects so many members of a society is to ignore the larger forces at play. A letter to the editor from S. Tloaelo in June of 1958 titled "King Alcohol" depicts the hold alcohol had on the urban population:

> "King Alcohol is my shepherd I shall always want. He maketh me to lie down in gutters. He leadeth me into the paths of wickedness for his effects' sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of poverty and have delirium, I will cling unto drink, for thou art with me: thy bite and thy sting, they torment me. Thou prepares an empty table before me in the presence of my family, thou anointeth my head with hellishness; my cup runneth over. Surely destruction and misery shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the condemned forever."[125]

It is difficult to reconcile the way alcohol appears in *Drum*. In many short stories and articles like those mentioned above, alcohol is a scourge of the population.[126] Sometimes these stories even appeared in the same issue as Casey Motsisi's column, "On the Beat," a pseudo-factual glorification of shebeen life. These contradictions seem to reflect the conflict between a critique of the social depression which drove Africans to escape into a "consciousness-numbing world of drink and drugs," and the realistic portrayal of African

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[124] *Drum*, no. 75 (May 1957); *Drum*, no. 83 (Jan. 1958).
[125] *Drum*, no. 88 (June 1958): 13. The editor's response to this mock prayer: "Amen!"
[126] "Marta" *Drum*, July 1956; Can Themba, *Requiem for Sophiatown* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006); "Lesane: The Idiot Boy" *Drum*, no.74 (April 1957).

urban life.[127] It is from these pseudo-factual reports and short stories that a symbol of female African power operating outside the parameters established by the white state emerges: the shebeen queen. By controlling access to home-brewed beer in urban areas, these women carved a space for themselves which they maintained and protected through their economic independence.[128] These economically powerful shebeen queens (both real and fictional), were the initial female figures to personify the modernizing trends which upended the traditional patriarchal social structures in South African cities.

In addition to neglecting this complex relationship between alcohol and urban residents, Dodson's analysis of "The Urchin" avoids any investigation of the effects of poverty on gang violence.[129] Although there seems to be no direct financial gain to be made by fighting the Berliners, in his description of the events Themba drops many clues that indicate the economic situation of the youth of Sophiatown.[130] While Dodson's conclusions regarding "The Urchin" are questionable, he does perceptively confront the psychological basis of criminal activity. Crime is a fact of life in most large cities and any number of sociological studies can point to the correlation between unemployment and crime rates.[131] For the citizens of Johannesburg, including the writers of *Drum*, one

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[127] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 32.
[128] Bonner, Delius, Posel eds., 15, 237.
[129] Dodson, 335. In fact, Dodson states that "Themba explicitly absolves poverty as the villain," without explaining how this is done.
[130] An associate of Macala's, Boy-Boy, "looked like a social worker's explanation of 'conditions of the slums': thin to malnourished, delinquent, undisciplined, dedicated to a future gallows," and Boy-Boy's parents were well-off (Themba, *Requiem for Sophiatown*, 106). If the son of a moderately wealthy family fell into gang activity, what would become of the "non-schoolgoing loafers who lounged against shop walls; blue-jeaned youngsters who twisted the arms of schoolgirls in rough love; odd job boys who ran errands for shopkeepers; truants, pickpockets, [and] little thugs within their age limit" who join ranks with the boys on their way to meet the Berliners (109). Dodson dismisses social causality too easily when so many school age children are available in the middle of the day and willing to participate in a gang fight.
[131] Clive Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2000), 34.

always had to be careful late at night, particularly after a long stay at the local shebeen. From almost its first issue, *Drum* featured reports detailing crime rates; however, the article "Crimson League," printed in January of 1953, marked the beginning of what Mac Fenwick called "gangster narratives."[132] Resembling the crime-fiction stories only a few pages away, these sensational news articles invariably glamorized a criminal lifestyle by dwelling upon the power and wealth of many successful gangsters. These "gangster narratives" became a regular and popular feature of the magazine. Durban based writers G.R. Naidoo and Rajendra Chetty capitalized on this field to such an extent that Woodson remarked, "an outsider reading isolated issues of *Drum*…could easily, though erroneously, conclude that South Africa's Indian population was remarkably deviant socially."[133] This was a fact not lost on some readers. A letter to the editor in November 1957 questioned why *Drum* continually featured these articles which only affirmed white peoples' negative impression of the "non-white" population.[134] The editor's response was that these articles only demonstrate that Africans, Indians, and Coloureds are able to criticize themselves.[135] Almost assuredly as important was the fact that *Drum* was a business venture, and sensationalized stories about crime, sex, and violence were sure to move copies.

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[132] Mac Fenwick, "'Tough guy, eh?': The Gangster Figure in *Drum*," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22, no.4 (Dec. 1996): 619. www.jstor.org/stable/2637160 (accessed December 4, 2010).
[133] Woodson, 6.
[134] *Drum*, no. 81 (Nov. 1957): 11.
[135] This response by the editor indicates the recognition of a white readership of some size. Additionally, this type of statement would aggravate later, race-conscious black writers of the 1970s who might have chastised the editor for assuming that black South Africans needed to prove anything to white South Africans.

Writing on the image of the tsotsi as portrayed in *Drum*, Mac Fenwick postulated that "the subversive image of the gangster-figure was elaborated as an effective subject position from which to resist the white state."[136] In Fenwick's interpretation there are three phases in the portrayal of gangster figures in *Drum*; condemnation appears first, followed by glorification, and nostalgia as the final stage.[137] The 1950s saw only the first two stages. Initially the criminal was portrayed as the one to take advantage of the *Jim* character, a predator that should be avoided at all cost. Gradually the crafty criminal who was able to out-wit the police and rival tsotsis became something of an anti-hero, sharing many of the traits of the trickster figure of African folklore. As Liz Gunner has stated in her discussion of the trickster as portrayed on Zulu radio, "in a situation where seemingly unlimited oppressive powers bear down, the trickster figure can easily assume the aura of a hero."[138] In *Drum*, the most notable of these was Arthur Mogale's (pseudonym for Arthur Maimane) character: O. Chester Morena, the Chief.[139] As a figure that Lembede could have used as evidence of the moral degeneracy of the cities, the tsotsi in *Drum* was the result of transculturation, the grafting of an American gangster image onto a South African trickster figure. As the Nationalist government enacted its segregationist agenda, the existence of urban black South Africans became one of illegality; the complex system of pass laws and curfews made it virtually impossible to obey the law. It seems natural then that black South African writers would glorify gangsters as role models, surviving and prospering despite the restrictive laws and violence of the South African cities.

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[136] Fenwick, 624.
[137] Fenwick, 618.
[138] Sarah Nuttall & Cheryl-Ann Michael eds., *Senses of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 222.
[139] *Drum*, Jan., Mar., Dec., 1953.

Taken together, the shebeen queen and the tsotsi in *Drum* are modern cultural symbols that represent African rejection of the subservient roles prescribed by the apartheid state, and acknowledge the flexible moral standards necessary for survival in the South African urban setting.

"There's something big on our shoulders, and so we stab and curse and beat one another": The muscular tension of urban South Africans as an impediment to community construction[140]

In a state that legally enforced the racially-based subjugation of the majority of its inhabitants, one would expect the cultural production of that majority to be rife with race-driven anger. This is why the lack of attention paid to race in the short stories of *Drum* is surprising.[141] Instead, on the pages of *Drum,* writers intermittently engaged emerging issues of ethnic animosities. Can Themba won the first short story contest with his story "Mob Passion," which he based on the Basotho-Nguni violence in Newclare.[142] This is the story of Linga and Mapula, two young lovers, he a Xhosa and she a Sotho, who are caught in a tide of rising ethnic anger. Their precarious situation is blown wide open when Mapula's younger brother Thabo discovers the truth of Mapula's secret meetings with Linga and tells their firebrand uncles, who assume control of an angry mob and move to attack Linga. On the uncles' orders, the crowd attacks Linga, and an enraged

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[140] *Drum,* no. 73 (Mar. 1957): 46. Mphahlele's words spoken by Lesane's wife.

[141] In February of 1958 a blunt letter to the editor was submitted in the form of a "report" by Korsten Coloured gangsters from Port Elizabeth (*Drum,* no. 84, 10). This "report" faulted Europeans and Africans for the lack of good jobs available for Coloured people; according to this gangster, competition over jobs was the rationale behind the ethnic and racial violence in the region. The editor's response to this letter was "two wrongs don't make a right, brother." This clichéd response was directed to a much wider audience than the gangsters of Port Elizabeth; it was a warning against the politics of revenge and retribution that many Africans felt the white people of South Africa had brought upon themselves.

[142] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 207.

Mapula responds by striking one of her uncles in the neck with an ax, wounding him severely. Seeing the broken body of her lover, she ceases her assault and falls to her knees wailing "Jo-o! Jo-o! Jo-o! Jo-na-jo! Jo-na-jo!"[143] Her lamentations trigger something in the crowd, "every breast was quelled by a sense of something deeply wrong, a sense of outrage. The tumult in every heart, feeling individually now, was a human protest insistently seeking expression, and then that persistent wail of the anguished girl, torturing the innermost core of even the rudest conscience there."[144] Themba's appeal to a common sense of human decency was a reaction to the ethnic divisions legislated by the apartheid state and one writer's attempt to pacify a dimension of the violence of South African cities.

"Mob Passion" is a story advocating basic cooperation among black South Africans regardless of ethnic heritage. This illustrates a critical point of contention between the older, conservative ANC members and many Youth League Africanists: alliance politics among Africans, Indians, and Coloureds. The racial divide between black South Africans and Indians was quite sensitive in the 1950s. Under the liberal government, Indians had not been subject to many of the regulations that dictated black movement in South Africa. In January of 1956, Es'kia Mphahlele wrote "Down the Quiet Street" which introduced the readers to Nadia Street in Newclare, which would be the setting of Mphahlele's "Lesane" stories. Lesane is the patriarch of a family on Nadia Street and Mphahlele created a series of short stories that details their daily lives in the township. In February of 1957, Mphahlele presented the reader with "Lesane: The Indian

[143] Themba, 16.
[144] Ibid.

Hawker." This story takes place on Saturday, when "the white man's work was suspended. And then someone beat his wife and children. A boy dug his knife into human flesh. A boy twisted the arm of a girl. The Zionists sang their half pagan, half Christian songs. All so brutally."[145] It is in this brutal world of Nadia Street that Ahmed Moosa makes his living selling fruit from a cart.[146] On this particular day, a man buys an apple and bites into it to discover one half of a worm. Enraged, he will not accept a replacement apple from Moosa crying, "just like you bloody coolies. Always bleeding us poor blacks and giving us rotten things."[147] Moosa's apologies do nothing to allay the man, and a crowd gathers catching "the fever" once they recognize the source of the conflict.[148] The frenzied crowd then began pelting Moosa with his own fruit, beating him and destroying his cart. Moosa only escaped serious injury because Fanyan, Lesane's son, rescued the hawker. Mphahlele dwells on the laughter of the crowd; senseless violence and wanton destruction are things to laugh about on Nadia Street. In the next issue the reader gets the explicit social explanation Dodson felt was lacking in many *Drum* stories. Ma Lesane explains why the people attacked Moosa, "if you put your foot hard on a heap of pebbles, you'll hear them grate, and you'll feel them push one another outwards. It's like that with us. There's something big on our shoulders, and so we stab and curse and beat one another."[149] In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon attributes this type of violence to the "muscular tension" of the colonized. As a

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[145] *Drum*, no. 72 (Feb. 1957): 54.
[146] Moosa is the Indian hawker, a regular on Nadia Street who is always laughing and generally gets along well with the residents.
[147] Chapman, *Drum Decade*, 153.
[148] Ibid.
[149] *Drum*, no. 73 (Mar. 1957): 46.

"dominated but not domesticated" people, the colonized release this tension "through the very real collective self-destruction of internecine feuds."[150] On Nadia Street, as in much of South Africa, the "muscular tension" of the residents resulted from apartheid policies that forced them to compete for space and resources.

Mphahlele's Lesane story, deriding ethnic violence, illustrates *Drum's* orientation toward the cooperative politics of the ANC which were based upon reconciliation.[151] The relationships between blacks and whites in the short stories of *Drum* are interesting in the way they reflect the political attitudes of the cosmopolitan elites of the early ANC. When white people appear in these stories they predominantly assume the role of a benevolent caretaker as seen above in "Farm Boy."[152] This generosity of white employers, combined with their willingness to share with Africans may have been an accurate portrayal of some white employers in South Africa, but these stories should be seen as an attempt to

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[150] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 17-18.

[151] This is apparent in a 1952 article by Henry Nxumalo entitled "Mr. Drum finds out: Mau Mau." This article contained an interview with Jomo Kenyatta and Nxumalo's description of the Mau Mau fighters, "they are not progressive in any way, but a return to savagery…They are closer to ritual murderers than for instance, to the ANC" (*Drum* 2, no. 12, 14-17). The Land and Freedom uprising would later be looked to in admiration by members of the PAC and it is telling that Nxumalo would contrast their actions with the ANC so early.

[152] "The Harvest is Waiting," written by Dyke Sentso for the June 1951 issue, is another story of the relationship between an African, April, and a benevolent white, Baas Scholtz (*Drum* 1, no. 4, 4-5, 49, 55). April is in search of a job after losing his previous one because he would not pull his children from school to help with the harvest. Scholtz considers his own children, and although he does not need the extra help, he gives April the job. Later in the story, April's wife, Neo has complications during her childbirth and Thabo, April's son gets the white doctor in the middle of the night. Dr. G.Z. Suider is annoyed at being woken by a "native" and reluctantly follows Thabo home. When they arrive, Neo has died delivering a baby girl. Dr. Suider is moved by the sight in the small room, "here in front of him was pain and poverty, here was misery and suffering and he had never done a thing other than giving medicines to allay such suffering, something stirred in him" (55). What Sentso has portrayed here is what ANC leaders in the 1950s hoped white people could be: caring, understanding, and capable of change. Another example of the benevolent white employer appears in July of 1952. Written by A.S. Massiye, "The Bride Price" is the story of Jack Temba who has yet to pay his wife Sonia's *lobolo* (*Drum* 2, no.7, 22-23). When Temba attempts to win the required sum by gambling, he is arrested. Mr. Kaufman, Temba's employer, pays his fine and brings him back to work on the farm. Soon after, while at work, Temba is digging a ditch and comes upon a box of money which he gives to Mr. Kaufman. From this box Mr. Kaufman gives Temba the £10 he needs, saying "take it…pay the bride price…work for me always" (23).

sway popular opinion and convince black South Africans that despite their personal experience with whites, it was possible to form mutually beneficial relationships across racial lines. The ways in which racial and ethnic struggles are portrayed in these stories is typical of the paradigms of behavior created on the pages of *Drum* by authors seeking to provide their cosmopolitan audience with guidance in parable form.[153]

By providing instructive lessons or survival tips for life in the cities of South Africa, many *Drum* stories can be read as urban parables.[154] These parables were not directly instructive; however, through the trials of the various characters examples are set. The short stories in *Drum* are targeted to an urban audience and these lessons are relevant to an urban population. Through these stories, the readers are encouraged to avoid people of low character, focus on their education, practice financial responsibility, and above all

[153] Not every story in *Drum* was didactic and even fewer were explicit with a message or lesson. In Dyke Sentso's story, "Under the Blue-Gum Trees," the main character seems to embrace the logic that underlay the United Party policy of stewardship, saying "that with white people, many things were possible…were made possible" (*Drum* 4, no. 4, 30-33, 42).

[154] It has already been mentioned that Dorothy Woodson did not consider *Drum* stories to be didactic; however, her comments, like Mphahlele's, should be considered in the social context in which they were made. Woodson published her index to *Drum* in 1988. Working during this period when culture was considered a valuable weapon in the liberation struggle, it is not surprising that these *Drum* stories would appear tame and bereft of educational value when compared with contemporary writing.

to act like they belong to a community.[155] The *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* style of story and its many variations seem to reflect a belief among *Drum* writers that the temptation to fall into a life of crime, drink, and *dagga* was particularly strong among newly arrived urbanites. A fundamental lesson that lies beneath the surface of many of these parabolic tales, as well as the realistic observational stories, is the importance of integrating these

[155] In Dyke Sentso's "Other People's Goods," Zondo is involved with a group of men led by Bull who steal things off trains (*Drum* 4, no. 2 Feb. 1954). Zondo's wife doesn't want him to continue this type of work, but Zondo thinks his "boss" and "co-workers" are better than those he could have in town. They push their luck however and one night they get caught by railroad men who do not feel the need to alert the authorities. Zondo "saw a great engulfing darkness and long fingers of death clutching at him." Another of Sentso's stories features this lesson of choosing one's friends carefully. "Pay Back" is the story of Hendrick who moves to the city and begins to hang around Jele (*Drum* 2, no. 5, 24-25). One night Hendrick is caught carrying some stolen goods Jele had given him and is fined £10. Hendrick's father pays the fine and warns his son to avoid Jele at all costs. However, Hendrick desires revenge and forms a plan to embarrass Jele at a party by telling stories of Jele's dishonesty. Hendrick's plan works, but as he is leaving the party Jele attacks him; Hendrick awakens in the hospital with head injuries, wishing he had not sought revenge. "Pay Back" is a lesson in choosing one's associates carefully but it is also a lesson in forgiveness. "The Boomerang" by Guybon B. Sinxo is even more explicit than "Pay Back" in describing the futility of revenge (*Drum* 2, no. 6, 21). Jameson Sonkobe is the headman of New Brighton village and he lives in the house designated for the headman, which he has spent years improving. One day Sonkobe discovers that his enemies have conspired against him and his nemesis will become the new headman and inherit the improved house. Filled with rage, Sonkobe sets about destroying all the improvements he has made over the years to keep his enemy from enjoying these comforts. Sonkobe scrapes all the paint off the walls, cuts down the trees he planted, and smashes up the concrete paths and patio. After a day of backbreaking work, Sonkobe receives a letter from the authorities stating that he will actually be keeping his job as headman as well as his house. Sonkobe learns the hard way that "revenge is not always sweet." On the importance of education, Lesane's daughter Diketso suffers from "the deserts of inadequacy she felt in herself because of the need to work when she wanted to be in school" (*Drum*, no. 70 Dec. 1956). In "Love's a Gamble" by Alexander Hlazo, Alexander must give up his relationship with a pretty girl because, as a student, he has an obligation to his education (*Drum* 3 no. 12, Dec 1953). In "The Harvest is Waiting," which has been discussed above, April gives priority to his children's education over his employment because "educated people live better lives materially and spiritually than uneducated ones." April continues, "there is nothing I can leave my children except the education I can give them. It is their legacy from me" (*Drum* 1, no. 4, 15). Plagued by economic instability, urban life for many black South Africans was one of constant struggle. Usually the reason *Jim* goes to *Jo-burg* is for employment, and financial responsibility was advocated in many different *Drum* short stories. In "The Fighter that Wore Skirts" by Bloke Modisane, the champ, Vincent Nkomo regularly argues with his wife over the need to save money in order to provide a safety-net for their future (*Drum* 2, no. 1, 19). Norah Burke wrote "The Family Man," a story about Kalu, a twelve year old Indian boy, who must take care of his four siblings when his father dies (*Drum* 5, no. 3, 46-51). When a swarm of locusts destroy his crops he must borrow from the money lender in town. The money lender is surprised when Kalu pays off his entire account, "for debt is the natural condition for everyone everywhere, and he [the money lender] held all the village in the hollow of his hand." These tales promoting fiscal responsibility at times conform to the structure of the Protestant morality tale where hard work and persistence pay off in the end. "The Other Side" was a reader submitted story which earned second place in the short story contest that year (*Drum*, no. 76, 48-9). Solomon works as a caddy and a gardener, his goal is to save up £12 in order to purchase a radio despite the fact that he lives in an area without electricity. Solomon resists the temptation to spend his money on other things and finally, after a "long period of patient endeavor and anticipation," Solomon buys his radio (49). Since Solomon cannot use the radio at his own home, he brings it to a friend's house that has electricity. Not only does this story stress the virtues of patience and hard work; in the end Solomon and his friend must share in order to fully enjoy the radio.

new arrivals into a community. The *Drum* authors appeared to be pushing the black South African urban population to recognize the vested interest each individual had in the development of a community that could protect and care for its members. This desire for a community was a common goal of both the traditional ANC leaders and the more radical Africanists. The ANC leaders believed this community included all those "non-whites" who shared a common experience of oppression as well as sympathetic white liberal allies. The Africanists, while not completely rejecting the presence of non-Africans in the community, believed that the terms of membership should be dictated by black Africans.

Dyke Sentso's "The Sun Stood Still" is an excellent example of a story in which the protagonist sets an example of community consciousness.[156] Selai is a farmer who lives in a region that is suffering from a prolonged drought. A prudent farmer, Selai had stocked up on maize and has plenty of mealie (corn) in storage. As the drought wears on and the people of his village run out of food, Selai provides many bags of mealie to his neighbors, selling to those who have money and giving bags to those who have nothing. Selai continues his service to the community even after he begins to care for his brother's family that was forced to leave their home in search of food. One night Selai surprised two men who were attempting to steal from his grainery and they fled into the darkness. Demonstrating his generosity and compassion, Selai goes to their houses the next day and gives them each the packets of mealie they were unable to steal the night before. When Selai finally runs out of grain, he is distraught because he believes he has sacrificed his

[156] *Drum* 1, no. 8 (Nov. 1951): 15, 17.

family for the good of the village. His wife comforts him; she knows her husband and had been sending children to buy bags of mealie from him. These bags, which she has hidden from Selai, will sustain their family through the rest of the drought. As they are having this conversation, storm clouds appear on the horizon signaling the rain to come. In this story, Selai has demonstrated the importance of caring for your neighbors. During this time of trouble, when everyone was suffering under the same hardship, Selai had the foresight to realize that the wellbeing of his own family was dependant on the welfare of the community in which they lived. The importance of community would continue to be a common theme for writers who contributed to *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider*. In Sentso's story, his wife's careful planning and the incoming storm clouds save Selai's family. Twenty years later, the writers of *Staffrider* did not feel the need to rescue their characters. Many of these writers were compelled by the demands of the liberation struggle and offering their characters up for martyrdom was a way that they could emphasize the importance of sacrifice. For many black South African writers in the late 1970s and early 1980s, after years of smothering censorship and violent repression, the importance of the collective superseded that of the individual.

"She threw a leg clean over my head. I bought some more hooch."[157]

With lines like this animating the investigations of Can Themba in his essay, "Russian Famo Sesh!" it is no wonder Graeme Addison, the former journalist and media studies scholar remarked that one could underestimate the role of *Drum* in documenting the urban black South African existence during the 1950s. By focusing on the fictional

[157] *Drum*, no. 84 (Feb. 1958): 49-51.

short stories in *Drum* it becomes apparent that Themba, Mphahlele, Sentso, and Modisane, as writers as well as members of the general population of black South Africans, were wrestling with similar dreams of multiracialism and fears of urban degeneracy, a dual phenomenon that complicated African radicalism in the ANC, particularly during the late 1950s.

Drum intellectuals with a political agenda constructed short stories that featured characters whose experiences often resembled the lumpen proletariat, a class of urban black people who were notoriously difficult to mobilize into a unified front. Characters like the tsotsi/trickster Chester Morena, and the shebeen queen Seleke, resisted white supremacy while simultaneously imagining their future in terms of ambiguous parables that revealed the exigencies of base survival through ruthless, and at times, cutthroat action.[158] These two character types on the pages of *Drum*, the shebeen queen and tsotsi, were the tandem that personified this lumpen proletariat; they gave birth to the rough expression of African autonomy and strength in the city. This “Eve and Adam” of the black township were seen as a source of moral degeneracy, often blamed, for example, by ANC Youth League ideologue Anton Lembede for sowing African cultural confusion. Some *Drum* writers, notably Nat Nakasa, who will be the focus of the next two chapters, saw themselves together with the shebeen queens and tsotsis as New Africans, consuming the forbidden fruit of modernity free of the poisonous "white hand." In doing so, cosmopolitan *Drum* authors accepted their Eden for what it was, a "brutal" and precarious garden, yet a community all the same.

[158] *Drum*, no. 71 (Jan. 1957): 60-67.

Building a black community, or African nation, was no easy task, these *Drum* writers insisted; they had some backing from both Testaments, and another testament too, which black political activists were constructing in Kliptown at the same time. In this regard, the 1950s were as profoundly shaped by the Freedom Charter, the foundational ANC manifesto, as the gardens of the shebeen queens and tsotsis celebrated in the pages of *Drum*. Nat Nakasa would bring the gospel of multiracialism inscribed in the Freedom Charter and a sense of *Drum's* literary cosmopolitanism with him when he struck out to establish his own magazine, *The Classic* in 1963. In fact, Nakasa did not have far to go as *Drum* owner Jim Bailey provided Nakasa a space within the larger offices of *Drum* and *The Golden City Post* to use for his new magazine. However, Nakasa's literary journey in search of a nonracial, inclusive cultural nationalism was a far longer and arduous voyage than these few paces across the hall would suggest.

3. "A cheap publication – a literary quarterly": *The Classic,* 1963-1971[159]

As a *Drum* journalist, Nathanial "Nat" Nakasa established his place among an emerging group of writers who would become the standard bearers of a new black South African urban literature. Among the prominent members of this group, which has been termed the "*Drum* school," were Es'kia Mphahlele, Can Themba, Lewis Nkosi, Bloke Modisane, Todd Matshikiza, and Arthur Maimane. These writers, whom Nakasa counted as friends and colleagues, introduced him to the South African literary world in the 1950s and provided him with an international network of contacts abroad during the 1960s.[160] These contacts in the United States and London would prove incredibly valuable to Nakasa as he struggled to find content and an audience for his young magazine, *The Classic*. While his literary accomplishments do not measure up to the successes enjoyed by Lewis Nkosi, Bloke Modisane, or Es'kia Mphahlele, Nakasa's sharp observations of South African society should place him in the company of Henry Nxumalo, whose provocative investigative journalism transformed *Drum* into much more than a magazine of sports and pin-up girls. Unfortunately Nakasa's spectacular death in the United States usually overshadows his life and he is often categorized as one of the self-destructive figures of the "*Drum* school" who died in exile, such as Can Themba and Todd

[159] Letter Nkosi to Nakasa, 30 Nov. 1961. William Cullen Historical Papers (WCHP) A2696 B2.
[160] Peter McDonald observed that the first edition of *The Classic* contained contributions by almost all the members of this distinguished group of ex-*Drum* writers. McDonald, *The Literature Police: Apartheid Censorship and its Cultural Consequences*, 128.

Matshikiza, and relegated to examples of how apartheid robbed so many young black men of promising futures.

In this thesis, Nakasa's magazine *The Classic*, serves as the initial expanse of a literary bridge connecting *Drum* to *Staffrider*. Spanning the tumultuous 1960s, the themes and characters of *The Classic* illustrate how the powerful social and political forces at work in this decade permeated the literary field. Emerging through the fictional writing of *The Classic* were competing notions of modernity and tradition that were often deployed through the depictions of rural and urban settings, as well as dissonant concepts of the South African nation as a multiracial union or black republic. Many writers of this period seemed to recognize the power of the written word, and the critical essays published in Nakasa's magazine serve as a record of these writers' attempts to determine their purpose as artists in an artificially divided society.

The following discussion of *The Classic* and its founder has been divided into two chapters. This chapter engages *The Classic* as a magazine struggling to survive as a forum for writers negotiating their position in a South African society convulsing in the aftermath of the dramatic events of 1960. The next chapter examines Nat Nakasa as the personification of the social tensions that stimulated political divisions within the black liberation movements in South Africa, and subsequently emerged through plot developments and trope characters in many of *The Classic's* short stories. This brief biographical sketch of Nakasa as a black South African magazine editor emphasizes the complex relationship between literature (and more broadly art in general) and politics. This relationship assumed a sense of urgency both domestically, as the apartheid state

implemented increasingly draconian forms of control, and internationally, as Cold War adversaries faced off on the field of culture. Examining the last three years of Nakasa's life exposes the incredible way in which this young South African writer, grappling with his own identity as a black artist in a repressive society, was drawn into the global struggle between East and West by agents acting on behalf of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

That Nakasa could become a set piece in what Frances Stonor Saunders called the Cultural Cold War is somewhat surprising considering his limited literary portfolio, the small size of *The Classic*, and its uncertain future. Shortly after publishing the first issue of his magazine in 1963, Nakasa received a letter from South African poet James Matthews expressing the hope that *The Classic* would avoid the fate of so many small literary magazines: a brief lifespan.[161] In the end, it was Nakasa's life that would be cut short while *The Classic* outlived its creator into the early 1980s.[162] Seventeen years after Nakasa fell suspiciously to his death in New York City, the literary magazine that he created had undergone a dramatic transformation that reflected the radical changes in black politics and black social thought that had been brought about by the revolutionary ideas of Black Consciousness (BC) in the 1970s.

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[161] Letter James Matthews to Nakasa 18 Nov. 1963: "I sincerely hope that *The Classic* is not going to take the same route many a literary magazine has travelled with as few appearances as possible." WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.

[162] Twelve issues of *The Classic* were published between 1963 and 1971; Nakasa edited the first three issues before he left South Africa in 1964 for the United States. Upon Nakasa's departure, Barney Simon, an editorial adviser to *The Classic*, acted as editor for the next five issues until he too left South Africa. The editing of the final four issues was handled by various literary guests in tandem with members of the editorial board. In 1975, Sipho Sepamla revived the spirit of *The Classic* under the title of *New Classic*, which appeared only five times over the next three years. In 1982, four years after Sepamla's final issue, Jaki Seroke resurrected *The Classic* for four more issues. This newest version of the magazine demonstrated the effect Black Consciousness had upon many black South African writers by exclusively publishing material written by black authors, expressing a black perspective.

"You see, the board of censors begins its unholy work this month. We had to be careful": Sharpeville-Langa and a state of emergency in 1960[163]

In a *Staffrider* article in 1982, Richard Rive famously stated that in the 1960s, writing in South Africa had virtually become white by law.[164] He lamented the apartheid government's banning of writers like Can Themba, Bloke Modisane, and Alex La Guma among many others. Such strict prohibitions on the circulation of their work appeared to sever the connection between many of the *Drum* contributors and their audiences in South Africa. By 1966, the printed ideas of Can Themba, Lewis Nkosi, Es'kia Mphahlele, and Bloke Modisane could no longer be read openly in the land of their birth. Yet according to Michael Gardiner's survey of South African literary magazines, *The Classic* served as an example that the 1960s, a decade known for "the ferocity of state oppression" did not simply represent a lost period of writing; nor was the literary production of black South Africans ever muted.[165] Writers and other artists in the 1960s were forced to adapt to new forms of censorship and methods of social control employed by the apartheid state in response to surging black political activism at the end of the 1950s.

By the end of 1959, both major African liberation organizations, the African National Congress (ANC) and the new Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) which had formed earlier that year under the leadership of Africanists who split from the ANC, had

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[163] Nakasa letter to Es'kia Mphahlele, 18 Nov. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 (file 1).
[164] Richard Rive, "Books by Black Writers" *Staffrider 5* no. 1 (1982): 14. Margreet de Lange, "The Muzzled Muse: Literature and Censorship in South Africa, 1963-1985" (doctoral dissertation, City University of New York, 1993), 190.
[165] Michael Gardiner, *South African Literary Magazines 1956-1978* (Johannesburg: Warren Siebrits Modern and Contemporary Art, 2004).

proclaimed their plans to hold nation-wide anti pass campaigns early in 1960. In the tradition of the 1952 Defiance Campaign, protestors would leave their passes at home and surrender for arrest. They endeavored to overwhelm the prison system, and deprive white society of the black labor on which the apartheid system was so dependent. The ANC had announced at its annual national conference that the day of protest would be March 31, 1960.[166] This announcement forced the rival PAC to initiate their campaign prior to this date if it was to seize the initiative from the ANC. Since the Africanists had begun splitting from the ANC, PAC leaders had been acutely aware of their need to build a following by drawing supporters away from the ANC. Thus the PAC set its day of national anti-pass protest for March 21, 1960.[167] PAC leaders were confident that they could channel the disaffection of black people into a mobilizing force. According to Tom Lodge, the PAC believed "all that was required was the correct message expressed in terminology with which ordinary people could identify, and popular rage would cohere into revolutionary uprising."[168] Although the first generation of Africanist leaders such as Anton Lembede and Peter Mda had recognized the amorphous nature of popular aspirations, by the time the second generation of PAC leaders like Potlako Leballo had taken control, the belief that the yearnings of black people would translate to organically

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[166] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 235.

[167] The leaders of the PAC, once in the activist wing of the ANC that produced the Youth League, were focused on immediate action. Gail Gerhart pinpointed the difficulty the PAC leaders faced once freed from the moderation of the ANC, arguing that "anyone could see that frustration and impatience were widespread in the general African population-but how could this discontent be harnessed to achieve political ends?" (Gerhart, *Black Power*, 212). The need to beat the ANC to a national anti-pass campaign is indicative of an apparent culture of impatience in the PAC that was fed by a desire for action and results. These attitudes have been used as an explanation for the weak organizational structure of the PAC.

[168] Lodge, 202. Gerhart examined more deeply the motivations behind this impatience and attributed PAC eagerness to confront the state to "that bane of serious revolutionaries since the days of Lenin," a "faith in mass spontaneity" driven by the "natural nationalism" of the people (Gerhart, *Black Power*, 232).

propelled mass action predisposed these leaders to appeal to what they saw as a combustible mix of frustration and discontent which could unleash popular outrage.[169] Of course, this strategy contained the danger of provoking major confrontations with police; seeking to avoid bloodshed, PAC founder Robert Sobukwe issued instructions to unarmed protestors to avoid violence.[170] This message was also delivered on March 18 by PAC member Philip Kgosana, a university student from the Langa township outside Cape Town, who had announced that "we are not leading corpses to a new Africa" and that PAC protesters should be mindful of state violence that could hinder the progress of a hoped-for massive anti-pass campaign.[171]

The PAC's emphasis on immediate action appealed to young, urban black South Africans for whom the ANC's more patient strategy that relied upon education as a means of achieving liberation had lost all appeal.[172] As historian Clive Glaser discussed in *Bo-Tsotsi*, a persistent disagreement over strategies for mobilizing the youth was one of the many causes of the split between the ANC and PAC.[173] A weak organizational structure and lack of funding collected from a relatively small membership forced the PAC to rely on "task forces" comprised of township students and tsotsis who could

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[169] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 232-33.
[170] Sobukwe followed up on March 16 with a letter to the commissioner of police Major-General Rademeyer explaining that the planned March 21 anti-pass protest would be a "sustained, disciplined, nonviolent campaign" culminating in PAC members surrendering themselves for arrest (Gerhart, *Black Power*, 235).
[171] Lodge, 215.
[172] Levels of popular political consciousness had increased throughout the 1950s among the urban youth, resulting in a desire for tangible progress toward liberation. Lewis Nkosi has pointed out that among his generation there were feelings that their elders had not taken decisive action against the loss of land and subsequent erosion of black rights in South Africa. By the 1960s, with no signs of progress, many youths were beginning to chafe against the leadership of established organizations like the ANC (Gerhart, *Black Power*, 214).
[173] Clive Glaser, *Bo-Tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2000), 78.

produce and distribute the *Africanist*, a pamphlet which served as the mouthpiece of the PAC.[174] Glaser asserts that tsotsi participation in PAC activities was not constant, but more "fluid and informal," yet leaders of the PAC were proud to incorporate for the first time such unlawful elements, many of whom were older boys and young men without education and literacy, into the unfolding national political struggles.[175] In *Bo-Tsotsi*, Glaser quotes a 1959 speech given by Robert Sobukwe to support this significant point: "the illiterate and semi-literate masses of the African populace are the key, the core and the cornerstone of the struggle for democracy in this country."[176] This tsotsi contingent, which consisted of unemployed youths who could be endorsed out of urban areas at any time, was particularly attracted to the PAC because of the organization's expressed resistance to pass laws. However, as Glaser points out, the fact that these gangsters "saw no serious contradiction between their usual criminal activity and their political motivations" would become a problem for the PAC as well as for later political organizations that sought to capitalize on youthful discontent.[177]

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[174] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 225.
[175] Glaser, 85.
[176] Ibid. See also Jonathan Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle* (67-71), for his discussion of the ANC's largely unsuccessful campaign "to organize youth politically on a mass scale." Hyslop attributes this partly to the ANC's "inability to address young people directly," preferring instead to work through parent intermediaries. Hyslop's study is invaluable as a source that addresses students as a potentially powerful political group that was subjected to racist apartheid educational policies designed to institutionalize the inferiority of black people. Hyslop will be revisited in later chapters as students began to assume more prominent roles in the liberation struggle in the 1970s.
[177] Glaser, 87-90. As an example of this mixture of criminality and political activism, Glaser examines the week after the Sharpeville-Langa incidents and the riots that swept through the Meadowlands and Soweto. Tsotsis attacked African policemen, who were seen as apartheid collaborators and the personification of the pass law system; these PAC activists also burned municipal buildings and accosted black Africans who appeared to ignore a PAC call to stay-away from work. Not only did these actions spur the apartheid state to launch an aggressive clampdown on all mass organizations like the ANC and PAC, such action also engendered resentment among the black population that fell victims to criminal elements harnessed by the PAC. Casey Motsisi's story, "The Riot," printed in the first issue of *The Classic* explores this unintended consequence of mobilizing tsotsis into the vanguard of liberation. Motsisi's contribution would be followed by several short stories in *Staffrider* that would question the relationship initiated by the PAC between tsotsis and militant activists as the responsibilities of liberation were increasingly shouldered by a younger generation.

Despite such commentary, the PAC in fact had no concrete plans for sustained violent rebellion.[178] Indeed, its anti-pass campaign, like so many other protests at this time, would be neutered by aggressive police action. On March 21, 1960, PAC President Robert Sobukwe presented himself for arrest at the Orlando police station; in the Johannesburg area, 170 PAC members were taken into custody for pass violations.[179] In Pretoria and Durban similar peaceful protests resulted in more arrests. However, at the Sharpeville police station, fifty miles south of Johannesburg, and in the Cape Town township of Langa, the scenes were much different.[180] The police at the Sharpeville station refused to arrest the PAC leaders at the head of the crowd, and these leaders in turn refused to disperse the crowd until they received a message from Robert Sobukwe to stop protesting and return home.[181] Undeterred by low-flying Sabre jets of the South African Air Force, the crowd of about 5,000 stood firm while 300 policemen mobilized inside a wire fence that surrounded their station. Early that afternoon, a scuffle broke out at the gate to the station and inexperienced officers began firing into the crowd, wounding 180 people and killing 69, including eight women and ten children.[182] The majority of those who were wounded or killed were shot in the back. In the aftermath of this horrifying violence, a general strike was called and persisted until after a mass funeral for the Sharpeville victims was held on March 30.

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[178] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 233.
[179] Lodge, 205.
[180] The crowd gathering in Sharpeville, numbering into the thousands, was far larger than the groups of people who demonstrated against pass laws in Johannesburg or Durban.
[181] Lodge, 210.
[182] Ibid. As with most incidents of this type, the number killed has been disputed, but the majority of reliable accounts put the figure in the high sixties.

In Langa, outside Cape Town, the anti-pass protest reflected a more concerted campaign to affect a protracted struggle between black residents and township police. On the morning of March 21, as PAC leader Philip Kgosana prepared a crowd of thousands, the police arrived and informed Kgosana that a large movement of people toward their station would be interpreted as an outright attack on the state. Kgosana agreed to disperse the crowd but informed the police that no one would go to work that day. That afternoon the killings at Sharpeville were reported on the radio, and by that evening, a crowd of around 6,000 people had gathered in the Langa New Flats area for a meeting. The police, who had been alerted, arrived and ordered the crowd to disperse before carrying out two baton charges which "had the effect of transforming a peaceful gathering into a furious one."[183] In response to hurled stones, the police trained their weapons on the crowd and fired, killing two people as the other protestors panicked and fled in confusion. Rioting broke out that night in Langa, and the strike initiated by the pass protest gathered strength and support throughout the week. By March 25, roughly fifty percent of the African workforce in Cape Town did not report to their employers.[184] That day, thousands-strong crowds descended on Cape Town's Caledon Square police station; many of the demonstrators openly courted arrest for pass violations. His hand forced, the commissioner of police, Colonel I.B.S. Terblanche demurred. Instead of shooting more unarmed demonstrators or taking them into custody, he announced that for the next month no one would be prosecuted for actively flouting pass laws; this decree was quickly extended to cover the entire country by the Minister of Justice, J.M.

[183] Lodge, 217.
[184] Lodge, 218.

Erasmus. According to Lodge's analysis, this "was the first time that a Nationalist government had conceded to an African political initiative and the action reflected the uncertainty of the government's handling of the crisis."[185] This uncertainty did not last long however. On March 30, the government declared a state of emergency and by April 1, Langa was cordoned off by police and army units in armored cars; they ruthlessly beat Langa residents with batons and drove township residents back to work.

Under this state of emergency, the South African state promptly took steps to ensure that nothing like the Sharpeville-Langa crisis would occur again. On April 8, Parliament announced the banning of the ANC and the PAC under the newly adopted Unlawful Organisations Act, which decreed that anyone suspected of membership in the ANC, PAC, or any other organization thought to be furthering the aims of these liberation movements could be arrested. The act also increased tenfold the penalty for committing an offense in protest of a law.[186] By May 6, over 18,000 arrests had been made. In addition to black protesters, many prominent white South Africans sympathetic to the aims of the ANC were considered by the state to be political subversives and were detained under the emergency regulations that had suspended habeas corpus.[187]

In response to such pressure, the ANC and PAC went underground and adopted armed resistance as their primary political strategy.[188] Under the direction of Commander-in-Chief Nelson Mandela, the military wing of the ANC, Umkonto we

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[185] Lodge, 219.
[186] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 246.
[187] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 245.
[188] The Unlawful Organisations Act not only decimated the ANC and PAC, but it also put increased pressure on the South African Communist Party (SACP) which had been negotiating the difficult terrain created by the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950. In reality though, any African organization could easily be linked to these banned liberation organizations through the corrupted apartheid legal system.

Sizwe or the spear of the nation, emerged "to advocate the implementation of a carefully controlled campaign of violence which in its initial stages would avoid bloodshed." [189] Umkonto (MK) conducted its first sabotage attacks against government buildings on December 16, 1961.[190] After these operations, MK distributed pamphlets justifying its action in reference to the non-violent history of the ANC, proclaiming that "the government has interpreted the peacefulness of the movement as weakness; the people's non-violent policies have been taken as a green light for government violence."[191] With this turn to armed struggle, ANC and MK leaders increased their efforts to secure the international aid and training necessary to wage guerilla warfare. In 1962, Nelson Mandela traveled to the Pan-African Conference in Addis Ababa and met with the heads of state of several African nations; he then traveled to London to meet with political leaders, and finally went to Algeria to receive military training.[192]

Upon his return from this international tour, Mandela was captured in Natal on August 5, 1962. The loss of this internationally recognized leader was compounded by

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[189] Lodge, 231.

[190] Oliver Tambo, *Preparing for Power: Oliver Tambo Speaks* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1988), 38. "Government installations" in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and Durban were targeted for their connection "with the policy of apartheid and race discrimination" according to the MK manifesto (Mandela, *The Struggle is My Life* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1986), 122).

[191] Mandela, *The Struggle is My Life*, 123.

[192] Mandela had been in hiding since he addressed the All-in African Conference in Pietermaritzburg in March of 1961 (Mandela, *The Struggle is My Life*, 7). The Algerian Revolution for independence from France (1954-1962) was looked to by colonized and oppressed people across Africa and the world as an inspiration. Described as a "Mecca of the revolutionaries," Algeria at the end of the 1950s provided a physical, as well as ideological shelter for many who opposed colonialism and racism (Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 1). Frantz Fanon, born in Martinique and trained as a psychiatrist in France, was drawn to the Algerian movement for independence and his experiences in Algeria contributed to his ideas regarding racial domination, colonialism, and revolution of the oppressed. Fanon's writing would be incredibly influential for young black South African activists in the late 1960s and 1970s. See Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace* for an exhaustive English-language history of this conflict. An interesting aspect of the Algerian revolution is revealed in Horne's work. As leaders of the liberation struggle in South Africa looked to Algeria for inspiration and assistance, French colonial functionaries looked to South African apartheid as a possible solution to their troubles in Algeria (Horne, 485).

the arrests of Walter Sisulu and other underground ANC leaders in July, 1963. On October 8, 1963, the day the duly named Rivonia Treason Trial began, Oliver Tambo, President of the ANC, addressed a Special Political Committee of the United Nations saying: "today some 30 persons are appearing before a Supreme Court judge in South Africa in a trial which will be conducted in circumstances that have no parallel in South African history, and which, if the Government has its way, will seal the doom of that country and entrench the feelings of bitterness which years of sustained persecution have already engendered among the African people."[193] Tambo was convinced that the apartheid court would hand down the death sentence and send the black population of the country into full-scale open revolt. Perhaps in anticipation of this potential outcome, on June 12, 1964, Mandela, Sisulu, and six other MK members were given life sentences for committing sabotage and preparing for guerilla war. In their encyclopedic history of African politics in South Africa, Thomas Karis and Gail Gerhart have deemed 1964 to be "the nadir of black resistance to the apartheid system."[194]

In addition to the Unlawful Organisations Act, the apartheid state passed the General Laws and Amendment Act in 1963, which provided for the detention of anyone deemed subversive without trial or charges for ninety days. The state adopted a sweeping interpretation of subversive activities that threatened all independent black organizations, including cultural and artistic enterprises that included *Drum* and *The Classic*. The detention period would be extended to 180 days in 1965, before indefinite detention

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[193] Tambo, 43-44. Mandela and his associates were arrested at Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, a suburb of Johannesburg.

[194] Thomas Karis and Gail Gerhart, *From Protest to Challenge: Nadir and Resurgence, 1964-1979* Vol. 5 of *A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1990* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 15.

without trial was allowed. The state of fear that had gripped much of the white population of South Africa after Sharpeville-Langa smoothed the passage of these repressive laws. The guerilla offshoot of the PAC, UmAfrika Poqo (Africans alone) carried out attacks in the Western Cape in 1963 in which some whites and several Africans who worked with government organizations were murdered. Gerhart described the organization as a reincarnated PAC, "minus its top level of more sophisticated leadership."[195] Gerhart continued to assert that the young men associated with this movement allowed "the urge toward a Fanonesque apocalypse to overwhelm all other considerations of ideology, strategy, or even organizational survival."[196] Poqo's actions, as well as the sight of thousands of black South Africans marching in solidarity at Sharpeville and Langa spurred the Minister of Justice to exercise his power under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 to ban individuals from public life without disclosing his reasons. Banning orders were customized to the individual but often included a restriction from public gatherings (more than two people), a restriction against publication or even being quoted by others, the prohibition of communication with other banned individuals, and a restriction of travel from a designated magisterial district.[197] For Nakasa, as an editor of a small, still developing literary magazine like *The Classic*, these banning orders were a constant hindrance. As the state moved to silence prominent black voices, both political and artistic, Nakasa found his available pool of established writers shrinking. Thus, the editors of *The Classic* were forced into a difficult situation in

[195] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 226. According to Tom Lodge, "Poqo's insurrectionary programme developed from the same vision of spontaneous popular uprising which had informed the PAC's conception of their pass campaign" (Lodge, 231).
[196] Gerhart, *Black Power*, 226.
[197] Karis and Gerhart, 15. By 1964 there were 303 people living under these conditions in South Africa.

which they not only had to avoid banned authors, but they also had to be wary of including the works of individuals who might be banned lest their issues become contraband material once published. Self-censorship became a common response to these new pressures exerted by the state, and throughout his correspondence with contributors and former *Drum* writers, Nakasa searched for a balance between his belief in uninhibited artistic expression and his desire to keep *The Classic* in circulation.

The political turmoil of the early 1960s permeated the artistic and cultural arenas in the form of the Publications Act of 1963. This law provided for the censorship of material that was "morally repugnant, blasphemous, socially subversive, or politically seditious."[198] While censorship on moral grounds had been a factor in South Africa before Sharpeville and Langa, the "pseudo-judicial" nature of the board of censors constituted by this act gave "the apartheid censors extraordinary discretionary powers."[199] It was in this atmosphere of "pervasive fear and imposed silence" that Nakasa introduced *The Classic* in 1963 as a platform for "African writing of merit" delivered through the medium of "short stories, poems, excerpts from plays, novels and other works."[200] While conceding that every effort would be made to feature South African artists, Nakasa welcomed submissions from across Africa and around the world.[201] He particularly

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[198] McDonald, 34.
[199] de Lange, 15; McDonald, 35.
[200] Anthony W. Marx, *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 38; *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 4.
[201] While *Drum* maintained a presence across Africa, of the four magazines under study here, no other editors pursued an international audience with the intensity of Nakasa. Maintaining contact with his *Drum* colleagues who had traveled to Europe or the United States, Nakasa clearly saw the potential for *The Classic* to become an international literary journal. It is reasonable to suggest that as the state, working under the pretenses of martial law and the state of emergency, sought to restrict black South African access to the outside world, Nakasa was driven to maintain a literary relationship with those beyond South Africa's borders.

welcomed "committed men and women who look at human situations and see tragedy and love, bigotry and commonsense for what they are."[202] This welcoming of "committed" writers seems to indicate that Nakasa was open to the artistic debate which would be carried forward through his publication onto the pages of *New Classic* and *Staffrider* thereafter. How was a writer to demonstrate his or her commitment? Did a certain responsibility accompany the recognition of "human situations…for what they are?" In a repressive society such as South Africa's, was there a place for art for art's sake? Or did the artist have a responsibility to create socially relevant art that addressed the profoundly unequal "human situations" all around him or her?

Perhaps recognizing the political undertones of his above statement, Nakasa continued to promise that *The Classic* would be as non-political as the lives of its readers, "if the daily lives of these people are not regulated by political decisions, that will be reflected in *The Classic*." Nakasa exhorted writers on the African continent to "seek answers and solutions to the problems around them."[203] He concluded the editorial by recalling an unnamed British writer who lamented that literature in England had been totally without direction, purpose, or power for the past decade; Nakasa hoped that this would never be said about any aspect of South African culture. When Nakasa wrote of "South African culture" he was referring to an inclusive national culture. In this way, *The Classic* evoked the spirit of the Freedom Charter as a magazine that welcomed submissions from all South Africans both at home and abroad, and was intended for all audiences. Emerging from the "*Drum* school" of cosmopolitan literary figures, Nakasa

[202] *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 4.
[203] *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 4.

firmly believed that an inclusive, multiracial nationalism marked the path beyond apartheid and designed his magazine to accommodate this belief.

In an article written for *Drum* in March of 1961, several months before he began to seriously consider establishing a literary journal, Nakasa wrote that life on "the fringe" was becoming more difficult.[204] "The fringe" was described by Nakasa as that place in South Africa where one ignored the apartheid system of racial segregation. "Some people call it 'crossing the colour line.' You may call it jumping the line or wiping it clean off. Whatever you please. Those who live on the fringe have no special labels. They see it simply as living."[205] Nakasa fondly wrote of attending weddings, sporting events, and parties where racial mixing was commonplace, and the prospect of a multiracial union of South Africans seemed promising. Though this "fringe life" was a complicated business, pass laws and the regulation of black movement in cites made any normal social interaction difficult. Nakasa's approach to state mandated segregation was simply to ignore it. When he first arrived in Johannesburg in 1957 as a *Drum* correspondent, he became a nomad of sorts, moving from place to place, sleeping at friends' houses or at the *Drum* office because he refused to commute out to the townships

[204] Nat Nakasa "Fringe Country: Where there is no Colour Bar." *Drum* (March 1961): 23-27. Bailey's African History Archives (BAHA), *Drum* Collection.
[205] Nat Nakasa "Fringe Country: Where there is no Colour Bar." *Drum* (March 1961): 24. BAHA, *Drum* Collection.

or to stay at the kennel-like barracks called hostels that housed single male workers in the city.[206] In one of Nakasa's articles he wrote of an experience at a fringe party. He had engaged an Afrikaner man in a pleasant conversation, during which Nakasa explained his nomadic lifestyle and mentioned that he would soon have to begin looking for a place to sleep that night. The Afrikaner was shocked and offered his home as a shelter for Nakasa. Dumbfounded, Nakasa asked the man how he could possibly invite a black man to spend the night under his roof when he had voted for the party that made this very act illegal. The man had no response but to say that the Nationalists were the party of his people, and he could not desert his people.[207] This limiting view of "a people" as an ethnic or racial group was something that Nakasa struggled to come to terms with. The difficulty he had with this notion was illustrated by a story he had heard and quoted in the first issue of *The Classic*. In this story, two friends, a black man and a white man, were walking together one evening in Johannesburg. The pair was stopped by the police who checked the black man's pass. Since it was late, the police asked the black man why he was not in his location, "among his own people," to which the man responded "WHO ARE MY PEOPLE?"[208] For Nakasa, the answer to this question was simply South Africans. Professing this belief in another article titled "It is Difficult to Decide my Identity," Nakasa adopted a truly inclusive interpretation of nationalism by claiming to be

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[206] Nakasa truly lived the "fringe" life he described in *Drum*. In his tribute to Nakasa, Theo Zindela recalled how Nakasa would approach a white woman on the street and speak to her, he would then walk down the street with her while she berated and insulted him for his insolence. After the first of such incidents, Nakasa explained to Zindela that it did not matter that they were arguing, what mattered was that people saw a white woman walking down the street with a black man having a conversation. For Nakasa, this was simply living as a human, but in the South African context, a black man refusing to flinch or cower before the verbal abuse of a white woman was dangerously provocative (Theo Zindela, *Ndazana: The Early Years of Nat Nakasa*, Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1990).
[207] *The Classic* 2, no. 1 (1966): 22.
[208] *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 62.

more at home with an Afrikaner than a European, an African-American from Harlem, or a Nigerian.[209]

It is important to consider this aversion to racial or ethnic categorization when reading Nakasa's opening editorial for *The Classic*. Though he used the phrase "committed men and women," and hoped for a South African culture of power and purpose, his intentions and perception of writing as a craft should not be confused with the many black South African writers in the 1970s who attached more racially exclusive and aggressive connotations to such statements printed in *New Classic* and *Staffrider*. Nakasa's tongue-in-cheek remark that *The Classic* would be as non-political as daily life in South Africa is also a reflection of his tendency to use subtlety to express a point rather than making a direct statement. In the words of poet Mongane Serote, "to those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, he significantly and clearly whispered a very important message- blackman, you are being lied to."[210] Themba interpreted Nakasa's whispering in a more constructive way, comparing his voice to other influential black figures of the time, "Sobukwe's is that of protest and resistance, Casey Motsisi's that of derisive laughter. Bloke Modisane's that of implacable hatred. Ezekiel Mphahlele's that of intellectual contempt. Nimrod Mkele's that of patient explanation to the patient. Mine, that of self-corrosive cynicism. But Nat told us 'there must be humans on the other side of the fence; it's only that we haven't learned how to talk.'"[211]

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[209] Essop Patel ed., *The World of Nat Nakasa*, 158-60.
[210] Patel ed., xxx.
[211] Patel ed. xviii.

The descriptions of Nakasa's audience and message that were offered by Serote and Themba serve as an example that highlights the tension between multiracial and black nationalist modes of thought that have complicated political dialogues and artistic production in South Africa. Themba, a leader of the 1950s "*Drum* school" of writers, viewed Nakasa's writing as a message to all South Africans stressing constructive engagement across the racial barriers established by apartheid. Serote, who would become a leading Black Consciousness (BC) poet of the 1970s as well as a high ranking member of MK operating from Botswana, considered Nakasa's subtle observations of the absurdities of South African life a wake-up call directed at black communities. Serote's comment here most likely echoed the BC belief that black artists were ultimately responsible to, and inspired by black communities. Despite these conflicting, retrospective interpretations, it is clear that Nakasa's writing gave voice to the frustration and dismay felt by black South Africans faced with the painful dislocations of apartheid. Nakasa used his articles in *Drum*, *The Classic*, and the *Rand Daily Mail* to articulate his conviction, as described by childhood friend Theo Zindela, "that anybody was capable of learning and therefore deserved to be taught and writing was the best facility for teaching."[212] In his writing, Nakasa was whispering to whites that they were being lied to as well. By considering the white audience for his writing, it might seem that Nakasa was situated firmly within Richard Rive's category of "protest writing," referring to black writing that appealed artfully to human reason and common compassion among the privileged few (whites) in hopes of effecting meaningful changes in racist attitudes and

[212] Zindela, 20.

legislation. However, the "protest" label fails to account for the complexity of Nakasa as a writer and editor. In a letter to Lewis Nkosi written in October of 1963, Nakasa revealed that he "suddenly got this idea that if we distribute fairly large numbers of copies of *The Classic* all over the country especially in the Non-white townships, we stand a chance of raising at least four new writers in a year."[213] Nakasa's attention to "non-white townships" indicates an awareness of his magazine's potential importance to black South Africans. His concern for these particular readers belies the impression one often gets from later critics that Nakasa was an elitist, far more concerned with the opinions of European literati than his fellow oppressed countrymen. Nakasa's attention to black townships, passing comment though it may have been, is also important in situating *The Classic* as a transitional magazine that preceded the race conscious focus on community in *New Classic* and the radical populism of *Staffrider*. Rather than viewing the focus on black communities and confrontational editorial policies of *New Classic* and *Staffrider* as a sharp break from the multi-racialism and literary subtlety favored by Nakasa and *The Classic*, one should view this distinction as a reflection of the social and political milieu in which these publications were produced. The emergence of BC and the efforts in the 1970s of groups like the Christian Institute's Special Programme for Christian Action in Society (Spro-Cas 2) and South African Students' Organisation (SASO) to stimulate cultural development and community consciousness through literacy programs in the townships clearly blazed a path for these later publications to follow. Prior to the appearance of these organizations that had such a profound impact on South

[213] Letter Nakasa to Nkosi, 22 Oct. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.

African society, *Drum* and *The Classic* were oriented toward community consciousness in ways that seem limited only in comparison to the methods and tactics employed in later decades. Indeed, in order to portray a black editor concerned with raising new literary talents from the often impoverished and undereducated "non-white townships" as anything but radical, one must ignore the incredibly repressive nature of apartheid during the 1960s.

"I am busy preparing and gathering material for the second issue of the paper. Sheer hell. Africa is not littered with frustrated Miltons eager to burst into the literary scene": The fiction of *The Classic*[214]

In order to situate *The Classic* as a precursor to *New Classic* and *Staffrider* it must be distinguished from *Drum*, where Nakasa received much of his education in the magazine trade. On the most basic level, *The Classic* was a full-blooded literary publication while *Drum* could be comfortably labeled a pop culture publication that

[214] Letter Nakasa to Miss Margaret R. Beels, Executive Secretary of the Farfield Foundation, 28 Jun. 1963. WCHP A2696 B3. This is the type of statement which distinguishes Nakasa from many black writers in the 1970s. These later writers, heavily influenced by BC, would reject the search for Milton in Africa perhaps in favor of a search for Mphahleles or Dhlomos in Africa. Nakasa's earlier statement about raising writers from "non-white townships" reveals the often contradictory nature of his "fringe life." Aware of the importance of his magazine to black readers and yet faithful to Western standards of literary excellence, Nakasa's tenure as editor of *The Classic* was a frustrating experience as he tried to acquire material to fill its pages. A young man when he began *The Classic*, Nakasa was still trying to determine his own identity and beliefs. This is apparent in the difficulty he experienced with both the Ivy League elitism and the Black Power of Harlem. As the following chapter will demonstrate, it appears that Nakasa was still growing, in the midst of an emotional and psychological transition, when he died in the United States.

included literary bloodlines.[215] Much academic writing on *Drum* has focused on this popular culture dimension, the pin-up girls, sports reports, sensational news stories, and fiction described by Arthur Maimane as "*Drum*-type pot boilers."[216] As editor of *The Classic*, Nakasa had a difficult time sifting through "pot boilers" in search of his envisioned "African writing of merit" and throughout 1963 he reached out to many of his old *Drum* colleagues for help. Nakasa often described the situation as "desperate" and appealed to his old friend Todd Matshikiza to rescue *The Classic* "from a lot of trouble" by composing a prose masterpiece for the magazine. Nakasa implored the talented musician and writer to "treat this letter as an SOS for contributions."[217]

Perhaps as an indication of Nakasa's dedication to "African writing of merit" and the strict literary standards to which he adhered, fewer *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* style stories

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[215] Such variation is clear in an exchange of letters between Nakasa and Dorothy Guedes in November of 1963. Guedes was acting as a translator and agent of French West African writer Luis Bernado Honwana whom Nakasa had contacted in search of material for *The Classic*. Guedes responded on Honwana's behalf offering a short story as well as an article Honwana had recently written about the *Marakenta*, a local African dance similar to the *Kwela*. Nakasa declined to publish the article and suggested instead that he might forward the article and photos to *Drum*, which he felt was a more suitable venue for such material. Though *The Classic* would publish excerpts of plays and feature photos and biographical sketches of visual artists, at this point Nakasa was not willing to embrace a wider range of performance arts. It is also possible that he reacted negatively to Guedes' offer because he felt that this sort of material was too "tribal" for the cosmopolitan Africans and global audience of readers *The Classic* sought to reach (Letters between Nakasa and Guedes, 24 Nov. 1963 and 29 Nov. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1).

[216] Letter Maimane to Nakasa, 19 Jan. 1963. WCHP A2692 B1 file 1. Maimane's own pot boilers first appeared in *Drum* in January and March of 1953 as "Crime for Sale" and "Crime for Sale #2" printed under his alias Arthur Mogale.

[217] Letter Nakasa to Matshikiza, 27 Aug. 1963. On the same day, Nakasa notified James Matthews that *The Classic* was "permanently short of material." Nakasa had also sent Maimane a SOS much earlier, possibly in late 1962. On 29 Aug. 1963 Nakasa contacted Athol and Sheila Fugard with a SOS, yet three months later Nakasa would demonstrate the strict literary standards he applied to *The Classic* even when short of material by rejecting a piece submitted by Sheila. Nakasa contacted Richard Rive in August of 1963 asking for East African writing, stating "we have had to reject practically everything that has come this way so far." WCHP A2696 B1 file 1. Finally, Nakasa wrote to Humphrey Tyler of the *Natal Daily News*: "The situation continues to be desperate as far as contributors for the second issue are concerned. Anybody who can help? We need the stuff." 16 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B2.

appeared in *The Classic*.[218] While the frequency of this type of story diminished, the underlying tensions between modernity and tradition, and urban and rural life that were expressed through *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* remained a feature of Nakasa's magazine. Two stories printed in a 1966 issue of *The Classic* dedicated to French African writing engaged these tensions, favoring a traditional style of life by contrasting African values with those of Europe and the West. In Birago Diop's "Sarzan," Thiémokho Kéita joined the French armed forces and his service took him across the Mediterranean, exposing him to the world beyond his African village. Upon his return, Kéita took up the colonial burden of civilizing his fellow villagers. After a year of forcibly enacting changes in his village, a friend (the narrator) visited the village to find Kéita raving mad. The friend was told "Sarzan [Sergeant] is no longer a Kéita. The dead and the spirits have avenged themselves for his insults."[219]

What is interesting about this story is the author's comparison between Western rituals and the African rituals scorned by Kéita. Diop compared the mask worn by the Gangourang ("Master of the children" during a circumcision ritual) to those worn at Carnaval in Nice; and he compared statuettes in the sacred wood to those of the Holy Virgin Mary.[220] Diop seemed to be demonstrating the merit of African traditions by comparing them to European customs. While Diop's assertion of the worth of African customs foreshadows the attitudes of many later artists, his need to justify the worth of

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[218] This style did not disappear completely however, see "Four Trunks" *The Classic* 2, no. 2 (1966). Without specifically focusing on a naïve African character, "A Burden of Sorrow" (*The Classic* 3, no. 3), and "Brandy and Water" (*The Classic* 1, no. 3) featured the corrupting influences of an urban environment that the *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* stories often utilized as a critique of modernization in South Africa.
[219] *The Classic* 2, no. 2 (1966): 17.
[220] *The Classic* 2, no. 2 (1966): 17-18.

"tribal art" by pointing to its "high civilization corollary" would be interpreted through the lens of BC as a weakness derived from the need to prove oneself according to white standards. In the same issue as Diop's story, "Gramophone," by Joseph Zobel, suggested a more symbiotic relationship between African and Western cultures.[221] In Zobel's story, Odilbert Faustin brought a gramophone and a variety of records to his African town after serving in the navy. So enthralled with this gramophone were the townspeople that the Faustins decided to hold a dance. After much preparation, including removing a partitioning wall in their house, the day of the dance arrived. To the embarrassment of the Faustins, the scuffing of dancing feet drowned out the sound of the gramophone. Just as Odilbert was about to call off the whole affair in shame, Tatave, the town accordionist arrived at the behest of Mr. Faustin and rescued the failing dance. In this story Zobel did not take a hostile stance toward Western cultural influences (technology in this case) as did Diop in "Sarzan." Faustin's gramophone brought joy to his town and exposed the residents to a variety of musical styles; however, it could not wholly replace its African counterpart, Tatave. Zobel's focus on the complementary relationship between Western and African cultures is more directly stated in Bessie Head's "The Woman from America."[222] In this story the narrator, a village woman in Botswana, summed up Zobel's theme in an assessment of her new neighbor: "this woman from America loves both Africa and America independently. She can take what she wants from both and say: 'Dammit'. It is a most strenuous and difficult thing to do."[223] This hybridization of

[221] *The Classic* 2, no. 2 (1966): 34-43.
[222] *The Classic* 3, no. 1 (1968): 14-18.
[223] *The Classic* 3, no. 1 (1968): 18.

Western and African culture was more openly discussed in these stories than those that appeared in *Drum* and was a reflection of the multiracial and multicultural acceptance of *The Classic* that was fostered by Nakasa.[224] These stories in *The Classic* also differ from those of *Drum* in their international angle. Many *Drum* stories that wrestled with modernity and tradition were fixed in an urban South African setting, and did not explore the origins of the city's potentially corrupting influences.

One of *The Classic* stories which resembled *Drum* stories by remaining within the borders of South Africa and detailing the corruption of the youth by the urban environment was written by Mafika Gwala and printed in a 1970 issue of *The Classic*. "Side Step" was told from the perspective of a man who lived next door to a mischievous twelve year old girl called Tiny.[225] Tiny's mother made sure to air "puritanical views whenever she was in young company and treated 'young life' like sour grapes."[226] The stifling atmosphere of Tiny's home life soon drove her away from the township at the age of thirteen. Six months later on a Maritzburg street, the narrator ran into Tiny who had "an experienced look in her face."[227] "She appeared to be a regular hustler now" and offered the narrator a sexual favor in exchange for fifty cents, but since his pockets were "soak-empty" they parted ways leaving the narrator wondering "how many men she had

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[224] The *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* stories in *Drum* were much more binary in their acceptance or rejection of modernity and tradition. While the tsotsi character in *Drum* stories certainly reflected an outside influence (as evidenced by the gangs that called themselves the Americans and the Russians in the 1950s, see Gary Kynoch's *We Are Fighting The World* for a detailed study of the Marashea Gangs of the Witwatersrand also known as the Russians); the overall themes in many of these stories suggest a more general acceptance or rejection of the modernity that accompanied urban life. In *Drum* stories the urban and rural settings were often static, fixed entities which forced characters to make their choices. In *The Classic*, and the later publications examined in this study, characters often had more agency, demonstrated by their ability to alter these environments through their actions.
[225] *The Classic* 3, no. 3 (1970): 67-71.
[226] *The Classic* 3, no. 3 (1970): 67.
[227] *The Classic* 3, no. 3 (1970): 71.

entertained with her freedom."[228] Gwala's story is an interesting point in the overall comparison of this project because he will become a significant contributor to *Staffrider* as a radical voice among BC writers. His story in *The Classic* begins to touch upon a character type, the assertive youth, which will be central in much of the BC writing that will be examined in later discussions of *New Classic* and *Staffrider*. However, in this case, Gwala's story seemed to follow an older model, similar to E. Rhezi's "Tomorrow Never Came" in *Drum*, where the child, freed from the control of family structures, is unable to withstand the corrupting influences of urban life and becomes trapped in this decadent state. Tiny expresses as much to the narrator, saying "I long to see home again, but I hate the sight of it."[229] Gwala's story in *The Classic* is the bridge between *Drum* stories that included a dimension of generational tension and later *Staffrider* stories that feature youthful protagonists. Tiny does not fit into either of these categories because the brazen defiance of her parents is not linked to any specific cause beyond hormone-driven teenage rebellion. In *Drum*, clashes between parent and child were largely due to financial concerns, and in *Staffrider* the rift between parent and child opens over political differences. Gwala's story may represent a slight break from the fiction of *Drum*; however, its style closely resembled the realism of *Drum*. The tendency of black South African writers to cling to this style prompted author Dennis Kiley to write to Nakasa, commenting that "thematically, your first issue seemed to me to hover rather closely around the miseries of being black in South Africa, and more specifically in

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[228] Ibid.

[229] Ibid. In Gwala's story, Tiny is a victim, acted upon and unable to take control of her own life. This is quite a contrast to later, BC inspired portrayals of the youth as assertive agents, working towards national liberation.

Johannesburg."[230] While the stories in later issues of *The Classic* would become more thematically varied, those that anguished over the absence of physical and emotional stability continued to appear in the magazine, and would retain a significant presence in *New Classic* and *Staffrider* as writers continued to lament the lack of community cohesion in many townships.

Realism that reflected "the miseries of being black in South Africa" could easily be considered politically subversive, and early in the life of *The Classic* Nakasa adopted an editorial policy of caution as an effort to avoid official censorship.[231] It is understandable that Nakasa would be overly protective of his fledgling publication; in the

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[230] Letter Kiley to Nakasa, 31 Oct. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1. The stories of Dugmore Boetie in *The Classic* are poignant examples of the writing style derided by Kiley. Three stories published by Boetie were printed in *The Classic* ("The Last Leg" *The Classic* 1, no. 2, 1963; "Familiarity is the Kingdom of the Lost" *The Classic* 1, no. 4, 1965; "Three Cons" *The Classic* 2, no 4, 1968) and would later be collected by Barney Simon who compiled and edited Boetie's works in *Familiarity is the Kingdom of the Lost*. As Simon explains in his epilogue to *Familiarity*, Boetie was a self-confessed con-man and all attempts to sort fact from fiction in this apparent autobiography "led only to chaos and contradiction." Yet Boetie's stories, fictional though they may have been, create an accurate historical picture of a black man's struggle to survive in urban South Africa outside the bounds of what was declared legal by the apartheid state. Boetie's stories indicate why community cohesion was so difficult to achieve. As a transient he was without a permanent place of residence, continually on the move, his struggle to survive pitted him against others in the same situation. In many of his tales Boetie takes advantages of wealthy white people, but at times he must exploit other black people who are equally destitute. Clearly, in Boetie's case, the imperatives of everyday survival overrode any tendencies toward social or political solidarity.

[231] This cautious approach was revealed when Arthur Maimane sent Nakasa a story titled "The Mad Nest" in October of 1963. Maimane recognized the potential consequences of his story and concluded his letter to Nakasa by joking "I hope it doesn't get you banned or anything like that" (Letter Maimane to Nakasa, 17 Oct. 1963). On the advice of his lawyer, Nakasa did not print Maimane's story in *The Classic*. With the recently passed Publications and Entertainments Act on his mind, Nakasa wrote back to Maimane explaining that "a censorship board is due to begin its unholy work in November. As we are anxious to remain in circulation it seems necessary to be cautious, if only for a while" (Letter Nakasa to Maimane, 22 Oct. 1963). This fear of politically aggressive material was not limited to South Africa, and Maimane, who was working in East Africa requested that Nakasa print the story using only Arthur's initials, since he regularly found himself working as a journalist for "employers who do not want their staff connected with anything politically controversial except perhaps with 'works of art' such as the novel" (Letter Maimane to Nakasa, 17 Oct. 1963). Nakasa was not worried about the political views expressed in Maimane's unpublished story; the "strong meat" that concerned Nakasa and his lawyer was an explicit bedroom scene. Nakasa had also been cautious when considering a story submitted by Can Themba earlier that year. In response to Themba's resubmission of the story titled "The Genuine Article," Nakasa referred to his earlier comments: "I did make it clear to you that although yours is a great story its success does depend on its subtlety. We agreed that you should cut down on the sort of political soap-box utterances at the Pimville meeting" (Letter Nakasa to Themba, 23 Aug. 1963). WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.

oppressive 1960s, editorial edicts were often handed down from Pretoria. While all twelve issues of *The Classic* were put into circulation without any being banned, the magazine could not escape altogether unscathed. The fifth issue of *The Classic* was published in 1966, the year after Nakasa's death, and commemorated his life by reprinting many of his articles. In this memorial issue, between pages five and six, a loose, blue slip of paper had been inserted where other pages had been removed. The insert read: "owing to the recent banning of Can Themba we have been forced to remove his tribute to Nat Nakasa."[232] Audrey Cobden, an editorial adviser to *The Classic*, had been forced to spend an entire day clipping out Themba's article "The Boy with the Tennis Racket," and inserting the explanatory note. Of her day's labor she wrote "what a bloody stupid waste!"[233] Increased censorship and bannings throughout the 1960s and 1970s proved quite wasteful for publishers. In his work on South African censorship, Christopher Merrett wrote that many government regulations stimulated self-censorship among writers, publishers, and book distributors who were worried about losses incurred by producing or carrying material that could not be legally sold.[234] Nakasa tended toward self-censorship at times because a small magazine like *The Classic* had no room for waste. To Nakasa, *The Classic* was more valuable than any political point he might make through a direct confrontation with the censors.

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[232] *The Classic* 2, no. 1 (1966). This loose slip of paper was preserved in the William Cullen Historical Papers as well as in The Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives. In addition to the painstaking task of removing Themba's article from each issue, the editor was forced to reprint William Plomer's poem "The Taste of the Fruit" on this insert because its closing verses ran onto Themba's page.
[233] Note written by Audrey Cobden, 29 April 1966. WCHP A2696 C.
[234] Christopher Merrett, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1994), 61, 77.

Despite his caution, Nakasa was not completely against publishing stories of a political nature. For example, he published Doris Lessing's story "Outside the Ministry" in the second issue of *The Classic*.[235] This story, set in London outside the Ministry building revolves around the conversation of four men from an unnamed African nation who are about to address the Minister on the topic of a proposed new constitution for their country. These men belong to two rival political factions; one clearly represents the interests of the nation, while the other represents the interests of foreign powers. The differences between the leaders of these two factions, Mr. Kwenzi and Mr. Devuli respectively, are stark; Kwenzi is measured and studied, while Devuli is erratic and drunk. As his faults are laid bare during their conversation, "Mr. Devuli, like a dethroned King in Shakespeare, stood to one side, his chest heaving, tears flowing, his head bent to receive the rods and lashes of betrayal."[236] This is the first instance in the four magazines under study of the sellout character appearing in print. On the subject of Devuli's sudden support of the weighted vote, Kwenzi's associate said "that cannot be described as a situation changing, but as a political leader changing- *selling out*," he continued "it is not the first time a leader of our people has taken the pay of the whites and has been disowned by our people."[237] This sellout trope would appear with increased frequency in the stories of *Staffrider* as agents of the apartheid state worked furiously to recruit informants and undermine black liberation movements. An outcast among his fellow

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[235] *The Classic* 1, no. 2 (1963): 15-23.
[236] *The Classic* 1, no. 2 (1963): 21. During the debate over who is most qualified to address concerns about the incredibly complex proposed constitution, it is revealed that as recently as twelve months ago Mr. Devuli had opposed the weighted vote proposed in the constitution in favor of a system of one man, one vote. It is also revealed that when Mr. Devuli suddenly changed his mind and announced his intention to accept the constitution, severe rioting broke out across the country.
[237] *The Classic* 1, no. 2 (1963): 20. Emphasis in original.

black Africans, the sellout character was subject to invective like no other characters of any color. While Lessing's story does not directly refer to South Africa, amid the rapid decolonization across Africa, this story is politically charged in the way it pits the righteous African nationalists against those who would sell-out and collaborate with Europeans (or Pretoria) to the detriment of their countrymen.

Stories that were set within South Africa tended to be less confrontational than Lessing's "Outside the Ministry." "For Christmas" is an example of such a story. Printed in the first issue of *The Classic* to be published after Nakasa's departure from South Africa, this story exhibits the subtlety that Nakasa often relied upon to expose the imposed inequity of the apartheid state. Written by David Zeffert, "For Christmas" begins with a white man who has traveled to a deserted beach to watch a South African Defense Force display of air power.[238] Lying on the beach, watching jets scream overhead, he wondered how foolish the enemy would be to dare challenge this power. At that moment he hears: "Baas, have you got some Christmas for me?"[239] Startled, the white man looked over to see a black man wearing tattered overalls carrying a stick standing nearby. Unimpressed by the white man's initial offer of a shilling, the black man clarified his request: "give me some Christmas, baasie, your clothes and your money, or I will kill you."[240] After a brief struggle, the white man relented and began his walk home naked as the jets shrieked overhead firing rockets into the sea. The black man's use of the term *baas* when speaking to the white man is certainly ironic; however,

[238] *The Classic* 1, no. 4 (1965): 52-54.
[239] *The Classic* 1, no. 4 (1965): 54.
[240] Ibid.

the prevailing irony of the story is revealed as he stripped, thinking that "next time he would be armed." This white man's need to arm himself against a stick-wielding black man while watching a demonstration of the technologically advanced weaponry that had been built expressly to protect white privilege exposes the absurdity of apartheid ideology. Though the white man fails to recognize it, the violent repression of the black population of South Africa is as futile as firing rockets into the sea. For white South Africans there just "weren't enough bullets or daylight" to keep the black population of the country subdued, and in the end, despite all the repressive legislation and expensive armaments, it would be these intimate, human-to-human encounters that dictated daily life in South Africa.[241]

As a magazine established for all South Africans, *The Classic* naturally included stories like "For Christmas" in which the tenuous nature of white security under apartheid was exposed for all to read. As Themba mentioned above, Nakasa encouraged communication across the legislated barriers between South Africans, and expressing both black and white points of view was an important part of *The Classic's* mission. Several stories in the magazine addressed the lives of white South Africans and contained subtle themes of white frustration.[242] This underlying sense of white frustration would be carried on in the pages of *New Classic*; however, in these later stories it became clear that

[241] Benedict Carton, "South African History" (lecture George Mason University, Fairfax, Va., spring semester 2010).
[242] "The Slave" *The Classic* 2, no. 3 (1967): 26-33 and "Lonely Walk Home" *The Classic* 3, no. 4 (1971): 44-52, were both focused on poverty among rural Afrikaners. "The Accessory" *The Classic* 3, no. 1 (1968): 21-29 is the story of a white woman who helps her neighbor hide the fact that he violated the Immorality Act of 1949 and had a child with his black domestic servant. The main character in Barney Simon's "The Birds" *The Classic* 1, no. 2 (1963): 6-12 is a man who is so distant from those around him that he simply cannot interact socially with other people.

the authors were suggesting that the social system created by white South Africans was at the root of their frustration, while in *The Classic* attempts to attribute cause to these brief glimpses of white frustration were rare. In *The Classic*, like *Drum* before it, there are relatively few references to black/white animosity or conflict when compared with *New Classic* and *Staffrider*. These later fictional stories were more likely to contrast black and white lives in a way that criticized the political and social system that created such unequal standards of living. This thematic break between *The Classic* and *New Classic* may be attributable to a combination of different factors, including Nakasa's own views of multiracial cooperation and fears of official censorship. The development that most dramatically altered the fictional treatment of black/white relations in these magazines was the emergence of Black Consciousness in the 1970s, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five. Writers who adhered to this race-conscious mindset emphasizing the value and importance of black life were more assertive and confrontational in depicting the negative aspects of white-minority rule. However, despite the significant cultural and political implications of BC, to claim it was solely responsible for the emergence of critical, race-conscious fictional short stories in these magazines would be inaccurate. The roots of this assertive writing can be found in *The Classic*, in character portrayals that would evolve into templates for more politicized writers of the 1970s and 1980s.

In the first issue of *The Classic*, Richard Rive wrote "The Party" in which the main character, a university student, is quite sensitive to racial differences.[243] The

[243] *The Classic* 1 no. 1, (1963): 68-76.

structure of this story and Rive's description of the white characters are remarkably similar to the ways in which later, more militant Africanist writers of *Staffrider* would create characters to express their BC philosophy of non-cooperation with whites. This comparison is particularly interesting because Rive was an avowed multiracialist, who was concerned that Nakasa might make *The Classic* a racially exclusive magazine.[244] Rive's story began with two Coloured university students, Manuel and Tom, preparing for a party thrown by Robbie, another Coloured student. Manuel does not want to go to the party but Tom goads him into attendance by accusing him of being anti-social and afraid of the white Student Representative Council (SRC) members Robbie had invited. Though Manuel and Tom are friends, they have an uneasy relationship; Manuel "secretly accused Tom of playing up to the whites. More white than the whites. Ingratiating himself over-imitating them. Outdoing them. Tom, in turn, found Manuel not only anti-white but anti-every-blooming-thing."[245] Manuel was nervous about the party not simply because of the whites, but because he intensely disliked Robbie, believing he played up to the whites even more than Tom, and as a result had no Coloured or African friends. Once at the party, the conversation turned to recent events on campus and a protest that had been organized by the SRC. Robbie had been the only Coloured student at the protest because the Students' Association (a Coloured students' organization) had

[244] Prior to the first issue of *The Classic*, Rive wrote to Nakasa, happy that his magazine would finally make it to print; "however" Rive continued, "one thing must be made clear. If it is going to be another Blacks only magazine it is doomed to failure at its inception. In the cultural field we cannot tolerate any form of discrimination of any sort against anyone, and any willful exclusion of whites, or browns, or blacks cannot be interpreted other than that." Rive continued to say that determining the merit of art based on "surface manifestations such as skin colour" was "the philosophical death-knell of any artistic endeavour." Rive would reiterate these concerns four months later in another letter saying "it only takes a 'Non-Whites only' notice to brand a magazine as racist and that would be a serious blow to a sterling venture." Letters Rive to Nakasa, 11 Apr. 1963 and 16 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.
[245] *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 70.

boycotted the event. As Robbie talked disparagingly about another student who had been arrested painting strike slogans, Manuel interrupted him, challenging "why the hell don't you do something? You talk too much!"[246] Deflecting Manuel's question, Robbie refused to acknowledge the challenge, but Manuel's outburst attracted the attention of several white students who had been talking about painting protest slogans around town. A bit drunk, Manuel agreed to accompany these white students who wanted to "do something really desperate" simply for "the sheer thrill of it."[247] These white students were portrayed by Rive as immature kids who painted slogans, not because they had a political agenda, but because breaking the law excited them. Zelda, the white girl that Manuel paired up with said "it's quite an experience breaking the law like this…here I am walking through a non-European subway with a Coloured man going to paint strike slogans. It's far more exciting than Robbie's lousy party."[248] The fact that she could compare painting protest slogans to a party revealed her level of political commitment. In the end Zelda spots the police and runs off, while Manuel, who had gotten progressively drunker, begins vomiting just as he feels the policeman's hand on his shoulder. Manuel's undoing, in addition to alcohol, was his decision to follow the leadership of these white students. Rive's portrayal of white characters cavalierly engaging in superficial anti-apartheid activity will be seized upon by later *Staffrider* writers who would deploy this character trope to emphasize the BC message of self-reliance among black South Africans.

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[246] *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 72.
[247] Ibid.
[248] *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 75.

While Rive's story provided a model for BC portrayals of white characters, Geoffrey Haresnape created a model for later black hero-figures with his story "The Tomb."[249] In this story, which earned its author second place in *The Classic* short story competition, the tsotsi/trickster figure uses his most valuable asset, labor, to exploit and insult his white baas. In Haresnape's tale, Afrikaner farmer Abraham Theron is dying and with his last days was preparing a tomb high above his property in a mountainside cave where he would lie next to the volume of diaries that chronicled his life. As Theron and his "head boy," Sikspens are working on the tomb, an argument erupts when Sikspens questions an order given by Theron. "Don't you know your place?" shouts the Afrikaner, "I don't know what rubbish ideas you got in Johannesburg, my boy. I think you'd better get back there."[250] Sikspens refused to submit, telling Theron "I must go to the Congo, sir. Katanga. I must be journalist." Sikspens continued, "I must express myself. I can't do that here."[251] Theron then flew into a rage, striking Sikspens in the face. Taking this blow, Sikspens expresses an acidic thanks to the farmer and reminds him that "now you say to me, 'Sikspens, do this. Sikspens, do that.' You are the boss. But when you are dead, who must say these things for you?...You must lie here. Your books must lie here. But when you die, how do you know we will do this?"[252] For Theron, this was too much and he orders Sikspens off the farm, but before Theron could enforce this expulsion he

[249] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 48-57.
[250] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 50. Haresnape never explains what Sikspens was doing in Johannesburg, but throughout the story the reader is exposed to a type of white anxiety that was a driving force behind influx control and the creation of black homelands: a fear of the so-called de-tribalized urban African.
[251] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 50.
[252] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 51.

becomes incapacitated by his illness.[253] That night Theron dies and the family begins preparing for his funeral on the mountain.

Despite the accusations of Theron's son that Sikspens had been creating an atmosphere of rebellion among the other African workers, Theron's wife insists that he participate in the funeral procession since he had worked so hard to prepare the mountain tomb. On the day of the funeral, Sikspens and several other laborers carry Theron's heavy coffin at the head of the procession of mourners up the steep mountainside. Near the top of the mountain, Theron's son barks an order at Sikspens who shot back "a look which seemed both wild and insolent."[254] At that moment the Africans began to move faster up a steep and narrow part of the path; as the son calls out for them to be careful, two of the Africans stumble, losing their grip on the coffin which swings out over the edge of the cliff and crashes down the mountain, shattering, and ejecting the embalmed body of its inhabitant.

In this story, Sikspens played on the prejudices of certain farm-based white South Africans, and used their low opinion of black people to his own advantage, in much the

[253] Theron was barely coherent when he was carried back to the farm and he tried to get his family to send Sikspens away. The family puzzled over the cause of the farmer's anger at his "head boy," and Sikspens convincingly played the part of the faithful but bewildered African. Theron's wife decides not to send Sikspens away, believing that he loves the farm where he was born and has spent almost his entire life working.
[254] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 56.

same way as the tsotsi/trickster figures of Dugmore Boetie's stories that were printed in *The Classic*.[255] In this instance however, Sikspens was not seeking material gains; instead, he was after retribution and a psychological victory. He knew how dependent the family was upon his labor and he used this to desecrate his baas's body in a most horrific manner. In this way, "The Tomb" foreshadows the BC influenced stories that would appear in *New Classic* and *Staffrider* by moving beyond material survival and emphasizing the importance of asserting one's self-worth. Theron was told by Sikspens that he could not express himself on the farm; however, in the end Sikspens was able to do more than express himself; he roared by casting his baas's embalmed body off a cliff in full view of his grieving family and friends. Even in death, Theron could not escape the wrath of the black laborers he had exploited to create his wealth.

Sikspens displayed several character traits that would become more popular in later stories of *New Classic* and *Staffrider*. He is educated and a confident organizer focused on action; immediately prior to Theron's free-fall, Sikspens had been whispering instructions to the other laborers. He values self-expression, and recognizing that he is worth more than his physical output, he is determined to write and even to become a professional journalist. This story, more than any other in *The Classic*, illustrates the power of coordinated (and victorious) African action against oppressive white rule. The writers of *Staffrider* would deploy this theme through characters that were modeled upon

[255] Enraged at the desecration of his father's body, the son tried to attack Sikspens but was thwarted by Theron's wife who defended her husband's "head boy." As the family questioned him about the incident, Sikspens adopted the broken speech pattern of an uneducated person, and professed sorrow and embarrassment, offering apologies that assuage the mourning Afrikaners. Theron's son tries to convince the family that Sikspens conspired with the other laborers to drop the coffin, but Sikspens effectively plays the role of the incompetent black laborer and deflects any responsibility for the catastrophe.

young black activists who, in the 1970s, began responding in dramatically confrontational ways to the oppressive environment created by the state. During this post-Sharpeville period, as students and other black political activists began to reexamine their approach to the liberation struggle, artists also began to question their role, and the purpose of their art, in such a divided society.

"It seems to me that there is a kind of constriction of the artist within society…a sort of political expectation in his work": Debating the role of the writer in the critical essays of *The Classic*[256]

One of the most significant features of *The Classic* to be carried on by *New Classic* and *Staffrider*, was the printing of critical essays in which writers discussed the state of their craft.[257] These essays stimulated a broad discussion on the nature of art and the place of the writer within South African society and the international literary community.[258] Two powerful articles in *The Classic* presage the politicization of this debate over the purpose of writing that would occur in the 1970s. The first article,

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[256] This is part of a question posed by Nigerian poet and playwright, Wole Soyinka to Professor William Abraham of the University of Ghana. *The Classic* 1, no. 4 (1965): 67.

[257] Perhaps the most important feature of *The Classic* was the poetry it published. South African writer, Mbulelo Mzamane has credited *The Classic's* 1967 publication of musician Abdullah Ibrahim's poem, "Africa, Music and Show Business" with initiating a literary renaissance in South Africa that resulted in an explosion of poets and poetry from the townships (Ibrahim was also known as Dollar Brand).

[258] When looking at the essays of *The Classic* in comparison with those of *Staffrider*, *The Classic* essays seem to embrace a more elite vision of writing in contrast to the populist driven *Staffrider*. As in every comparison between these magazines, it is important to consider the social context in which they were printed. The populism of *Staffrider* owes much to the efforts of BC activists in the previous decade. The elitist impression of *The Classic* is more difficult to evaluate. Nakasa's policy of paying contributors and its continuation of *Drum*-type short story contests encouraged participation by the general public. Additionally, after Nakasa left *Drum* to work full time on *The Classic*, Jim Bailey let Nakasa use a room in the *Drum* office for his own magazine. Among the many letters soliciting material that Nakasa sent out in 1963 were several which he addressed to people who had submitted their stories to the *Drum* contest. These people had not won the contest, but Nakasa had seen promise in their work and encouraged them to submit to *The Classic*. Despite Nakasa's extensive international literary network, he still combed through the hundreds of *Drum* contest entries and contacted those, often first-time writers he felt deserved a place in *The Classic*.

published in 1965, was a series of interviews conducted by Lewis Nkosi entitled "African Writers of Today."[259] The second article, printed in 1968, Nadine Gordimer's "South Africa: Towards a Desk Drawer Literature," was a reprint of a talk she had previously delivered to students at the University of the Witwatersrand.[260]

Nkosi's interviews engaged a number of literary academics and African writers in general discussions of African literature. Nkosi's inquiries orbited around a question that would plague the writers of *New Classic* and *Staffrider*: what role should the black African artist play in his/her society?[261] Nkosi's interest in the writer's role as a nation-builder was particularly relevant for South Africans confronted with extensive crackdowns in the 1960s and the bannings of the major national liberation organizations. As open association with the ANC, PAC, or South African Communist Party (SACP) was made illegal, it fell to ostensibly non-political social and cultural organizations to foster a sense of group identity among black South Africans. It is striking that the answers Nkosi received regarding the nation-building responsibilities of the writer were not nearly as provocative as the questions he posed. Professor William Abraham responded that "if they [writers] live in African society, then I expect them to produce

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[259] *The Classic* 1, no. 4 (1965): 55-78.

[260] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 64-74. These two would clash over the editorship of *The Classic* and the direction in which it was heading, Nkosi was wary of white dominance on the editorial board and Gordimer was concerned with maintaining, as she saw it, the legacy established by Nakasa. See McDonald, 129.

[261] Nkosi asked the editor of *Black Orpheus*, Ulli Beier, "are there any extra responsibilities for African writers?" Nkosi then became more specific and asked Professor William Abraham "what role has an African author to play, if any, in the national building, the national building [sic] in the young countries of Africa or elsewhere? Do you have any ideas what his social obligations might be." In the next interview Nkosi asked about Malawian poet and teacher David Rubadiri's relationships with the politicians in Malawi and if "they are sensitive to this need for poets to play a part in the development of your cultures or of the cultures of all, or do they think poets are disturbers of the peace?" Nkosi's questions placed African writers in a position quite distinct from white writers; as the voices of new nationalisms in emerging African states with international credibility. Nkosi clearly saw the potential of these authors to challenge the political status quo. *The Classic* 1, no. 4 (1965): 55-78.

critiques of African society," specifically criticism with "contemporary significance."[262] Abraham was referring to the need of the writer to connect with an audience by exploring themes and situations that were familiar to the readers. Without this connection, the writer would be unable to offer criticisms of society that were relevant to the reader's own experiences. This bond between audience and writer will become more important for the writers of *New Classic* and *Staffrider*, as will Nkosi's search for the "responsibility" and "social obligations" of the writer.

Where Nkosi's interviews explored the potential political impact of writers in Africa, Gordimer's essay was a reaction to the apartheid approach to writing in South Africa. Delivering a scathing rebuke of state censorship as exercised under the aegis of the Publications and Entertainments Act, Gordimer also challenged the indifference of South Africans who enabled the curtailing of their own right to new ideas and open debates.[263] Gordimer described how the apartheid authorities had gradually progressed beyond a morality-based censorship to one which placed limits on imagination and individual consciousness, as manifested in the banning of writing and speech "that does not conform to the officially regulated picture."[264] Gordimer interpreted this censorship as the silencing of "the dialogue of self-questioning, value-probing, the expression of the eternal tension between doubt and faith in all human affairs…that dialogue which can be followed fully and deeply to its unspoken centre only by uncompromising art."[265] Like

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[262] *The Classic* 1, no. 4 (1965): 66.
[263] Gordimer's passion for freedom of literary expression is evident when she compares the self-censorship of authors, editors, publishers, and booksellers to that of inmates policing their own concentration camps. *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 66.
[264] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 67-68.
[265] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 64.

Nakasa, Gordimer saw the production and appreciation of art as activities that could lead to a greater understanding between all South Africans. Gordimer rejected a utilitarian theory of literature, for another discourse in which "*the writer's freedom to write or not write about whatever aspects of the life around him he chooses*" reigned supreme.[266]

Gordimer's view of writing closely resembled Nakasa's perspective, which he laid out in a speech at the University of the Witwatersrand and later printed in the first issue of *The Classic*. Like Gordimer's article, Nakasa's speech contained his recommendations for improving South African writing as a national endeavor; and he made it clear that he saw South African literature as a potentially unifying force.[267] Nakasa believed that by striving to achieve a higher quality of literary production through a deeper understanding of their subjects, both black and white authors could come to appreciate one another as human beings and members of one South African nation. Others in *The Classic* would echo Nakasa's suggestion that stronger criticism of South African literature was necessary to ensure a healthy development of the craft. Nkosi stated as much in a letter to Nakasa late in 1963 urging him to toughen the critical standards of *The Classic* in order to avoid becoming a "mutual admiration society."[268] Conflict over this goal would arise in *New Classic* and *Staffrider* as others writers began

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[266] *The Classic* 2, no. 4 (1968): 65. Emphasis in original. In the pages of *New Classic*, Gordimer would find herself defending this choice *not to write* in the article "A Writer's Freedom" published in 1975. She would argue that any requirements placed upon the writer, including those that would call for the writer to take up the struggle against oppression, constituted a form of censorship.

[267] It is no stretch to say that Nakasa's and Gordimer's views of the potential power of literature were a bit utopian. When investigating the potential of literature it is necessary to distinguish author from audience. The fact that a writer like Nakasa might create a document with some express message in mind does not necessarily mean that a reader of that document will derive that same message. This is taking into account that Nakasa as a writer preferred subtlety to the direct statement. Of course, even prior to this stage the writer needed to ensure that his/her work reached the hands of their intended audience (for Nakasa and Gordimer this was a large, multiracial one), which was no small task in South Africa.

[268] Letter Nkosi to Nakasa, 16 Oct. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.

to question what type of critical standards should be applied to literature that was created in service to the liberation struggle. For these writers, their commitment to the struggle overrode any commitment they may have had to a concept of literature as an art form free from the demands of a particular time or place. Black Consciousness undoubtedly played a role in orienting these writers toward the immediate and specific needs of their fellow oppressed South Africans. As the influence of BC grew among students and artists, the literary debates of *The Classic* assumed a sense of urgency as increasing numbers of black writers advocated an inward turn, tailoring their work to an exclusive audience of black readers. While Nakasa was unable to witness the cultural impact of BC (he died almost four years before the formation of Steve Biko's BC driven student organization), he was exposed to another race-pride movement across the Atlantic in the United States where the Black Power movement was gaining momentum. The details of Nakasa's life, which ended so far from where it began, provide an example of the extreme politicization of literature on a global scale and demonstrate how one man tried to negotiate the polarity of multiracialism and black republicanism.

4. "My intention is to let out a number of broad generalisations in human terms, based on my impressions of various things…this is simply a personal statement from me to you": Nat Nakasa, a personification of history[269]

In the following chapter, Nat Nakasa will serve as the personification of the historical forces that are used in this thesis as the threads binding together literary, political, and social developments in South Africa between the 1950s and the 1980s. Nakasa's physical and philosophical journeys from the outskirts of Durban, to the cosmopolitan world of *Drum* in Johannesburg, and finally to Harlem and the seat of Black Power illustrate how C.R.D. Halisis's concepts of multiracial unionism and black republicanism were deployed as specific responses to immediate circumstances rather than held as ideological dogma. These broad categories, discussed throughout this thesis in the context of real and fictional characters, should not be taken as fixed, static positions at odds with one another. Nakasa's life serves as an example of how fluid one man's identity could be in response to the daily negotiation of these forces. His experiences also illustrate the political importance of writing, not simply in the paranoid interpretation of the apartheid state that sought to silence even moderate voices of opposition, but on a global scale in Cold War contests of power. Nakasa attracted the attention of a CIA funded philanthropist who saw this young writer as a potential weapon to be used in the ideological battle being waged against communism.

[269] *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 56.

It is difficult to discern why Nakasa was selected as a recipient of CIA funding. Although he reached his maturity as a writer during a tumultuous period in South African history, witnessing the horror of Sharpeville, the looming threat of censorship that followed the state of emergency, and the banning of the ANC and PAC, Nakasa was not radicalized by these events. In fact, by the time he was contacted by the "pass through" organization that would sponsor *The Classic*, Nakasa had only been working as a journalist for five years, and had yet to establish a substantial literary portfolio that indicated his commitment to multiracialism. Perhaps it was this brief resume, an absence of publicly defined principles, which drew the attention of the CIA-supported cultural organization that was in the process of establishing a presence across Africa. Regardless of the intent, Nakasa's patron did not anticipate the writer permanently leaving his native country so soon after launching his literary magazine. Nakasa would never return to South Africa, and many of his contemporaries have questioned whether he would have committed suicide had he not gone to the United States. A more provocative question to consider is how Nakasa would have responded to the social and political forces that radicalized many South African artists of the 1970s. Speculation of this type suggests that Nakasa, as well as his CIA supported sponsor, would have been forced to react to the swelling ranks Black Consciousness inspired artists who surely would have flocked to *The Classic* as a black-edited magazine. Considering the implications of these unanswerable questions prompts an investigation of Nakasa's youth and his career as a writer that allows for a deeper understanding of how he arrived at the conclusion that

literature, subtly deployed, could act as a unifying force that would foster communication across the color bar and stimulate a multiracial national consciousness.

Nathaniel Ndazana Nakasa was born in 1937, the son of Chamberlain Joseph Nakasa and Alvina Zondi. Nakasa's father was a typesetter and an aspiring writer who instilled a love of literature in his children.[270] While Nakasa was still young, his mother was afflicted with a mental illness and sent to Sterkfontein mental hospital, permanently separating her from her husband and five children.[271] This distance from his mother would affect Nakasa in untold ways. In his book *Ndazana: The Early Years of Nat Nakasa,* childhood friend Theo Zindela recalled that Nakasa never failed to mention his mother's beauty and grace whenever he talked of her. As a young man, perhaps seeking to reconcile the heavy loss of his mother, Nakasa became a member of The Church of the Assemblies of God and was heavily influenced by Reverend Nicholas Bhengu and his "back to God crusade" which deplored the insecurities of township life that were so vividly portrayed in the stories of *Drum* and *The Classic*.[272] It may have been the violence of township life, or the trauma of family separation that he experienced as a child, but according to Zindela, Nakasa "exhibited an urgency to express sorrow and bitterness…he had a tormented soul which cried out for realism, tangible beauty, and love."[273] An example, given by Zindela, of this torment was an occasion when the Chesterville Cultural Club produced a performance piece that included the fifteenth century English carol "Jerusalem, My Happy Home." Nakasa deliberately chose to

[270] Lauren Groenewald, *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere,* VHS (South Africa: Times Media Production Co., 1999).
[271] Theo Zindela, *Ndazana: The Early Years of Nat Nakasa* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1990).
[272] Zindela, 9.
[273] Zindela, 8.

perform the four verses that described the sadness and sorrows of a terrestrial life and omitted the verses that reveled in the glory and splendor of Jerusalem.[274]

Educated at Mazenod Combined, a Roman Catholic mission school, and Eshowe High, a Lutheran church mission boarding school, it was at Eshowe that Nakasa would form the most influential friendship of his life with Lewis Nkosi.[275] These two, together with their friend Zindela, all shared a love of literature and joined together to form the Chesterville Cultural Club. Zindela recalled in *Ndazana* that Nakasa had a "very low opinion of individuality," speculating that this drove Nakasa to continue pursuing group solidarity by persuading his two friends to join him as members of The Wesley Guild.[276] The Reverend E.Z. Sikakane at the Chesterville Methodist Church formed this group; and here the boys were shown pictures of black and white guilders working side by side on community projects.[277] It is possible that Nakasa's guild experiences and his love of English language literature, together with his mission education laid the groundwork for his commitment to multiracialism later in life. According to Zindela, it also set Nakasa

[274] Zindela, 7-8.
[275] Zindela, 4.
[276] Zindela, 5. It is worth questioning how Zindela has formed this conclusion. As a *Drum* staffer, Nakasa maintained his individuality from this group of shebeen frequenting reporters. His dedication to an insecure "fringe" life in apartheid South Africa despite the legislated barriers which assured his "separateness" seems to suggest that something other than a fear of being alone drove Nakasa's youthful search for group solidarity. As a child of an "inter-tribal" marriage (his mother was Zulu and his father was Pondo), his decisions to join these cultural groups with his friends may have stemmed from something as simple as a rejection of the ethnic and racial fragmentation of society that resulted under apartheid. If Zindela's conclusion regarding Nakasa's view of individuality is to be taken as true, then this would situate Nakasa's thoughts on social organization close to those of the BC inspired writers and political activists of the 1970s who valued the interests of the collective above their own.
[277] Zindela, 6-7.

up for disillusionment, which was "the staple diet of pre-bantu education intellectuals."[278] Like others who received their schooling prior to the implementation of Bantu Education, the employment opportunities and social activities open to Nakasa did not match his capacity as a critically thinking individual. The importance of Nakasa's mission education as opposed to the crippling program of Bantu Education cannot be overstated when comparing Nakasa's subtlety in writing and his multiracial conception of the nation with the overtly political and aggressively race-conscious writing of many black authors in the 1970s.

Bantu Education was the apartheid state's response to the urban crisis of the 1940s and 1950s. Rapid urbanization and industrialization had created a large population of young Africans that the mission education system could not contain. This mass of predominantly illiterate, unemployed youths created "a situation where such fears of crime and political activity were at the forefront of policy makers' concerns, the inability of the existing educational system to reach large numbers of youth became a major problem for the NP [Nationalist Party] government."[279] By the early 1950s, the existing Mission school system was overwhelmed by the surge of pupils, and the system's resources were stretched to a breaking point. Such material deficiencies sparked student

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[278] Zindela, 4. Zindela lamented the fact that their educational experience placed them in a difficult situation as the political and social climate in South Africa changed during the 1970s. "It is regrettable to note that in view of the subsequent emergence of Black Consciousness, our mission education (the Wesley Guild training included) was dysfunctional" (7). Written in 1990, Zindela's statement reveals the lingering influence of BC thirteen years after Steve Biko's murder and the government offensive against prominent BC organizations. One can assume that Zindela was observing the radicalizing effect Bantu Education had upon the youth of South Africa, for only in considering the politicization of the youth under this system could one consider a mission education in South Africa more "dysfunctional" than the programs of Bantu Education.

[279] Jonathan Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle: Policy and Resistance in South Africa 1940-1990* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1999), 5.

reactions, often in the form of food riots in which "food became a metaphor for issues power and authority," or acts of vandalism and arson on some Mission school campuses.[280] As a consequence, the state began implementing portions of the 1951 Eiselen Commission Report as law in 1953. Bantu Education did not truly become policy until 1955, and as Jonathan Hyslop points out in *The Classroom Struggle*, it was not a static program bound to the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission Report. Rather, Bantu Education changed over time in response to social pressures and "similarly, changes in political consciousness and organisation – affecting both teachers and students – dramatically altered the form of resistance to Bantu Education."[281] Resistance to Bantu Education would become far more aggressive and widespread in the 1970s, but at this point it will suffice to examine how Nakasa's short time in a government school was not enough to counteract his Mission education and early life experiences.[282]

Part of the Minister of Native Affairs, Hendrick Verwoerd's scheme of Grand Apartheid, Bantu Education worked in tandem with the establishment of the so-called Bantu Homelands, which conveniently "made people responsible for their own oppression" through the Bantu Authorities and school boards.[283] A component of Bantu Education which would generate fierce resistance in the late 1970s was the directive to provide some instruction in Afrikaans rather than English. For Nakasa this would have been an incredible outrage. After he came to Johannesburg, Nakasa remarked that he no

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[280] Hyslop, 16.
[281] Hyslop, xiii.
[282] *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere*. Only from 1951 to 1954 did Nakasa attend the Chesterville Government School.
[283] Hyslop, 42.

longer thought in Zulu, the language of his mother, and that this language was insufficient in capturing the world in which he lived.[284] Nakasa preferred to speak and write in English, considering it to be the international language of business and modernity. This belief would be echoed by black students in the 1970s who rejected this aspect of Bantu Education as a government attempt to deprive them of a useful education, deny them access to economic opportunity, and isolate them from the international community. Although Bantu Education was effective in limiting black South African opportunity, its design also stemmed from the Nationalist government's need to accommodate its Afrikaner base as indicated by the program's noxious interpretation of history that conformed to the triumphant trekker narrative. Es'kia Mphahlele described it as "education for slavery" and was involved in teacher protests against the policy that preceded action by the ANC, which Mphahlele stated, "was caught with its pants down as far as the introduction of Bantu Education was concerned."[285] The ANC boycott of Bantu Education (1955-1956) was unsuccessful for a number of reasons; perhaps most important was the fact that parents needed their children in school. The alternative schools and cultural clubs created by the ANC had neither the capacity nor the funding to

[284] Patel ed., *The World of Nat Nakasa,* 159. Nakasa wrote: "I can no longer think in Zulu because that language cannot cope with the demands of our day. I could not, for instance, discuss negritude in Zulu. Even an article like this would not be possible in Zulu."
[285] Hyslop, 34.

support the large population of urban youth.[286] While they were at work, parents needed their children to be in school and not in the streets where trouble might find them. In the eyes of these concerned parents, some schooling was better than none.

With regard to the urban crisis, the state policy of Bantu Education had succeeded to a degree; however, underfunding and increased enrollment in the 1960s would turn urban schools' students into "a powerful social force with a common identity."[287] Hyslop states that "it was the youth's common experience of a poor quality mass schooling system that created a common sense of identity and grievance" and he continues by quoting a teacher who said "Bantu Education made us black."[288] The consequences of this state policy, which would turn schools into political incubators, will be discussed in the context of *New Classic* in chapters five and six below. For this investigation of Nakasa's belief in an inclusive multiracial nationalism, Hyslop's description of the effect of the culture of mission education on its teachers, while sweeping, is appropriate. This culture, in Hyslop's opinion, advanced "certain conformist and imperial values" but also emphasized the "responsibility of teachers to the community they served, and the need

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[286] Hyslop, 65-67. These cultural clubs were set up through the African Education Movement (AEM). The need to combat the crushing effects of Bantu Education would be manifested through the articles on African writing in The *Classic* and *New Classic*, as well as in the *Staffrider* workshops. The articles in these magazines served as forums in which established writers could share their literary experience or training with a population that was not receiving such instruction in their formal schooling. This desire to provide an artistic and cultural education outside the school grounds would be carried on in the many community arts groups that were established in the 1970s such as Medu Art Ensemble, Mihloti, and Mdali (Music, Drama, Art and Literature Institute). In the confrontational atmosphere of the late 1970s and 1980s, these efforts would often assume a political dimension as group members inspired by BC sought to conscientize their audiences.

[287] Hyslop, 53.

[288] Hyslop 152. This is a reference to the BC concept that being "black" was a matter of attitude rather than skin pigmentation. This aspect of BC will be examined in greater detail in chapters five and six.

for the teacher to make an exemplary contribution to community life."[289] Nakasa's values were not necessarily "conformist" as they regularly placed him on the wrong side of apartheid laws, and created a distance between himself and other black South Africans, some of whom felt he became "addicted to white bread in Hillbrow."[290] However, Nakasa did feel a responsibility to his community and, in the words of Nadine Gordimer, as "a new kind of man in South Africa" his community consisted of *all* South Africans, and he contributed to this national community by living and writing without regard for racial segregation.[291]

"You mean Nat? Man, that guy just slays everybody with his naiveté": *Nat Comes to Jo-burg*[292]

By 1956, as Bantu Education was being implemented, Nakasa had already finished his formal schooling. At this time, two members of the Chesterville Cultural Club, Nkosi and Zindela, were employed by the newspaper *Ilanga Lase Natal* while Nakasa was laboring for an engineering firm. Nakasa soon followed Nkosi's footsteps, getting a job first at *Ilanga Lase Natal* and then, in 1957, moving to Johannesburg to work at *Drum* as Nkosi had done the year prior. Nakasa's arrival in Johannesburg was recalled by Can Themba in the article that was laboriously removed from every copy of *The Classic* by Audrey Cobden: "he came, I remember, in the morning with a suitcase

[289] Hyslop, 26. Of course these "conformist" and "imperial values" were subject to the demands of everyday survival, and as black communities came under attack by the agents and legislation of apartheid, the teachers who served these communities were often forced to reevaluate their beliefs.
[290] Zindela, 18.
[291] Patel ed., xxvi.
[292] Zindela, 22.

and a tennis racket- ye gods, a tennis racket!"[293] Nakasa hardly fit the profile of the streetwise *Drum* journalists led by the self-styled Can Von Themba himself. Arthur Maimane described Nakasa as an outsider among the *Drum* writers, walking the streets of Sophiatown with stacks of books in his arms and speaking in a manner that an Englishman would recognize as proper, earning himself the derogatory title "a situation."[294] As a modest drinker he set himself apart from the other *Drum* men by limiting himself to a tippler of brandy after work, rather than surrendering himself to the strong spirits as did many of his colleagues. While his partial temperance may have resulted from his faith, this difference was one of several reasons Nakasa remained apart from his fellow journalists even after he had become well established as a writer at *Drum*.

In his memoir of Nakasa, Zindela recalled asking Lewis Nkosi how their mutual friend was progressing as a journalist at *Drum*, and Nkosi replied: "you mean Nat? Man, that guy just slays everybody with his naiveté."[295] Themba's story about Nakasa's arrival in Johannesburg with a tennis racket certainly conjures the image of a naïve young man seeking acceptance among an imagined group of effete black intellectuals that did not exist in any real sense. Themba continued to recount Nakasa's arrival, explaining that the other staffers had decided that Themba should be this tennis-playing Durban-boy's orientation guide to the city and the magazine. The most crucial stop on this orientation tour was a local shebeen on Edith Street, and as Themba told it, "honest, I don't know

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[293] Patel ed., xvii.
[294] *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere*. The title "a situation" comes from the tendency of an Englishman to asses "a situation."
[295] Zindela, 22. Zindela recalled asking Nkosi this question when they were both covering the Rivonia Trial, but does not provide the details of this conversation, such as how or where it actually took place. These details are important because Nkosi had accepted an exit permit in 196 and would not have been allowed to enter the country to cover the trial which began in 1963.

how it happened, but I left him there."[296] Alone in a strange city, Nakasa decided to search for his guide and approached a group of tsotsis to enquire about Themba's regular haunts, engaging these infamous and dangerous figures in conversation as a fearless journalist with an inquisitive mind. Although Nakasa would spend the majority of his adult life as a journalist, it is possible that he was never fully comfortable in this role. As Heather Margaret Acott has observed in her unpublished dissertation, "Tactics of the Habitat: The Elusive Identity of Nat Nakasa," Nakasa's writing featured "literary elements parading as journalistic fact."[297] It may have been this aspect of his writing that prompted Alister Sparks to invite Nakasa to author a column for the *Rand Daily Mail* in 1964. As the first black columnist for this major newspaper, Nakasa used his pulpit to write about his own daily experiences in South Africa. Though his articles were not overtly political, both Nadine Gordimer and Mongane Serote recalled that Nakasa's position as an eloquent black journalist writing for a paper that boasted a largely white readership made him a dangerous person in the eyes of the state.[298]

In the early 1960s, as Nakasa was establishing himself as one of the country's most prominent black journalist, he was beginning to envision what would become his most important contribution to the South African world of letters, *The Classic* literary magazine. In "The Boy with the Tennis Racket," Can Themba has recalled the genesis of *The Classic*, stating that the idea for the magazine came during the ninth round of drinks at an old dry cleaning shop that had been converted into a shebeen. Themba would

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[296] Patel ed., xvii.
[297] Heather Margaret Acott, "Tactics of the Habitat: The Elusive Identity of Nat Nakasa" (master's dissertation, University of South Africa, 2008), 11.
[298] *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere*.

appropriate the name of this establishment and bestow it upon the nascent magazine, remembering how "most of us got stinkingly drunk, but Nat captained the boat with a level head."[299] While this memory is probably accurate on some level, the idea for *The Classic* came to Nakasa from across the Atlantic Ocean from his old friend Lewis Nkosi who was in the United States as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University in 1961. On November 30, 1961, Nkosi wrote to Nakasa after spending a weekend in New York City. Nkosi began by recounting the parties and jazz clubs he had enjoyed over the weekend before getting to "the burden" of his letter. Nkosi proceeded, "here is a plan we thought you might like! Jack wants to give you guys a small sum of money to help you start a cheap publication - a literary quarterly – coming out say 4 times a year. He would give you something like 100 dollars a month – or about £36 for organizing it and printing…We thought you and Can might get together an interested group of African writers, organize a club for discussion, and use the paper as a mouthpiece of the group. Jack is anxious to hear from you soon."[300] This "cheap publication" described by Nkosi would become *The Classic*, and its American patron was John "Jack" Thompson, the executive director of the Farfield Foundation; a corporation established by Julius Fleischmann, a wealthy cultural scion, after he was approached by a CIA agent and sold on the idea of combating Communist propaganda through cultural warfare.

Jack Thompson and the CIA sponsored Farfield Foundation had been introduced to Nkosi while he was in the process of organizing funding for his Nieman Fellowship in

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[299] Patel ed., xix

[300] Letter Nkosi to Nakasa, 30 Nov. 1961. William Cullen Historical Papers (WCHP), file number A2696 B2.

1960. Nkosi was denied a passport by the South African state and was forced to accept an exit permit that permanently barred him from returning to the land of his birth. This permit, which was a way the state discouraged travel by black South Africans who were considered to be subversive, prevented Nkosi from securing funding for his trip through the source that typically supported South African Nieman Fellows, The United States-South African Leader Exchange Program (US-SALEP). US-SALEP was initially created to promote and protect United States interests, primarily in the form of uranium deposits, in South and Southern Africa; however, the support of this organization was predicated upon an exchange of ideas, personnel, and values.[301] Since Nkosi would not be returning to South Africa, Thompson and Farfield stepped in to ensure that Nkosi would be able to complete his Nieman Fellowship. Brought together by Nkosi, Nakasa and Thompson corresponded throughout 1962 with regards to the anticipated literary journal, discussing how Nakasa could establish a trust into which the foundation could deposit funds. By May of 1962 the proposed annual grant from Farfield had reached $1,200, and by 1963 it jumped to $1,600 to be deposited in quarterly installments.[302] Thompson stipulated that this grant was for one year only, but "naturally, if the project is successful, we would entertain an application for renewal."[303]

The Farfield Foundation would be the primary contributor to The Classic Magazine Trust Fund for the entire run of *The Classic* until its final issue in 1971. In the

[301] For more on US-SALEP see Daniel Wolf "My Own Country in True Perspective: The Social and Political Legacies of The United States-South African Leader Exchange Program, 1955-1965" (master's thesis, George Mason University, 2005).
[302] Letter Thompson to Nakasa, 15 May 1962; letter Nimrod Mkele to Mr. D. Bradford, 29 Mar. 1963. WCHP A2696 B3.
[303] Letter Thompson to Nakasa, 15 May 1962. WCHP A2696 B3.

early days of *The Classic*, Nakasa and Nimrod Mkele, chairman of the trust and an editorial adviser, had pursued additional funding by attempting to sell advertising space in the magazine. Nakasa and Mkele soon found that most companies were not willing to pay for advertising space in "a new quarterly publication giving a platform to contemporary African writers" that could demonstrate no substantial readership.[304] In March of 1963, during this solicitation drive, Mkele contacted the South African mining titans at Anglo-American Corporation about buying advertising space. The corporation declined, and instead suggested Mkele apply for a grant.[305] Mkele's initial letter suggested the amount of one hundred Rand, which would cover the cost of the cover pages.[306] By August, Nakasa wrote to Thompson to notify him that The Classic Magazine Trust Fund had received a grant from Anglo-American for the amount of £1,000.[307] With the backing of these corporations, the editors of *The Classic* abandoned their quest for advertising revenue and instead focused on subscriptions to supplement the grant money.

Without the grants from Farfield and Anglo-American, there is no doubt that *The Classic* would not have enjoyed its long lifespan. It seemed to be quite the stroke of luck that Nkosi was able to connect Nakasa with a foundation that was willing to commit $1,200 to a literary publication that did not yet exist, to be edited by a man who had

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[304] *The Classic* advertising tariff. WCHP A2696 B3.
[305] It is perhaps not surprising that Anglo preferred to give Nakasa and *The Classic* grant monies rather than buying advertising space. Purchasing advertisements in a magazine is a contractual arrangement; Anglo funds would be exchanged for space in the magazine. Grant funding is quite different and depends upon criteria established by the granter, presumably agreed upon by the grantee. This relationship bestows a greater degree of control to the granter than the purchaser of advertising space. While there are no records of Anglo or Farfield attempts to influence editorial policy, as Sipho Sepamla would discover in 1978, the ability to withhold funds at their discretion was a factor that could affect editorial decisions.
[306] Letter Mkele to D. Bradford, 29 Mar. 1963. WCHP A2696 B3.
[307] Letter Nakasa to Thompson, 5 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B3.

produced virtually no fictional writing, all based on the word of his childhood friend. Described in the *UNESCO Handbook of International Exchanges* (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) as a "philanthropic foundation dedicated to the promotion of international and cultural relations, through the work of professional artists and intellectuals," Farfield could afford to be recklessly generous because it was a dummy corporation, a "pass through" entity that funneled funds from the CIA to projects and organizations deemed capable of advancing the ideas and values of Western democracies through artistic and cultural activities.[308] In *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters,* Frances Stonor Saunders discusses the creation of Farfield in 1951 and its incorporation in early 1952 as a non-profit organization, "formed by a group of private American individuals who are interested in preserving the cultural heritage of the free world and encouraging the constant expansion and interchange of knowledge in the fields of the arts, letters, and sciences."[309] Farfield Foundation did not "exist except on paper" and it was not an exceptional case in this regard. By the mid-1950s, philanthropic foundations had become the most convenient way to channel CIA funds to organizations and associations without the recipient's knowledge.[310] The allure of clandestine action in service to Western democratic ideals appealed to many wealthy American cultural elites such as Julius Fleischmann, heir to the Fleischmann yeast and liquor fortune, who used his wealth to finance New York's Metropolitan Opera as well as numerous Broadway productions. With Fleischmann as president, a group of directors

[308] "International Opportunities for Artists: Pour L'artistes a l'etranger," *Leonardo* 2, no.1 (1969): 95. Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 116.
[309] Saunders, 125.
[310] Saunders, 127, 134-5.

and trustees was constituted from a select sect of privileged Americans and board meetings were held regularly, usually attended by a "guest" from the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) who would observe the debate and acceptance of a list of pre-approved budgetary items in what former CIA operative Tom Braden called "a very big farce, of course."[311] A representative of the CCF would attend the Farfield board meetings because the Foundation had been created expressly to funnel CIA funds to the thirty-day Festival of Twentieth-Century Masterpieces of Modern Arts; organized in 1952 by the CCF in Paris, as a way to exhibit the robust and vibrant cultural output of the United States.[312] Farfield proved to be such an effective "pass through" that it was maintained as "the principle conduit for Agency subsidies to the Congress."[313] In fact, its activities associated with the festival established Farfield as a credible backer of the CCF and of artistic and cultural exchanges. Thompson was the longest serving executive director of this "pass through" foundation from 1956 to 1965, and he denied any knowledge of CIA funding. It is even more difficult to discern if he was carrying out a CIA agenda, although it is easy to recognize that the CIA probably never had a vested interest in any truly independent artistic production.

In 1964, a United States Congressional sub-committee headed by Texas Congressman Wright Patman began investigating the tax-exempt status of many private American foundations. Patman's investigation uncovered CIA involvement with The Kaplan Fund, based in New York, through irregularities that emerged during an Internal

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[311] Saunders, 127.
[312] Frances Stonor Saunders *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. (New York: The New Press, 1999), 116.
[313] Saunders, 116.

Revenue Service investigation of the foundation. Saunders states that the names of eight CIA front foundations were leaked during this investigation; while Farfield was not among those named, its legitimacy was being tested.[314] According to intelligence officer Lawrence de Neufville, "it was meant to be a cover, but actually it was transparent. We all laughed about it, and called it the 'Far-fetched Foundation.'"[315] Recognizing the flimsy status of their cover, Farfield began spreading money around to many domestic and foreign recipients, sponsoring travel, conferences, and publications; it would be another two years before the CCF and Farfield were publicly exposed as CIA sponsored organizations.

Well before Thompson propositioned Nakasa, the CCF was an established presence in Africa, financing projects to counteract communism as well as the Non-Aligned Movement which was attracting a following across post-colonial Africa.[316] In 1961, the same year that Thompson had offered support to Nakasa's non-existent publication, Es'kia Mphahlele was made director of CCF's African program on the suggestion of Ulli Beier who co-founded the Mbari Writers and Artists Club in Nigeria

[314] Saunders, 353-56. A Proquest search of newspaper articles from 1964 revealed that several articles regarding the Patman-Kaplan investigation were printed in *The Washington Post*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and the *L.A. Times* in September of 1964. None of these articles named any other foundation except The Kaplan fund.
[315] Saunders, 357.
[316] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, 123. The Non-Aligned Movement was an organization of states that rejected the Cold War binary of East or West and refused membership in either Western or Eastern blocs.

and subsequently began receiving CCF support for the organization.[317] Nakasa's *Drum* network, without which *The Classic* might never have come into being, now drew him further into this covert cultural struggle between East and West. After the first issue of *The Classic* was published, Mphahlele wrote a congratulatory letter to Nakasa, including the addresses of *Black Orpheus* in Ibadan, Nigeria and *Transition* in Kampala, Uganda, as an attempt to foster "a strong triangle of exchange of material."[318] Both of these publications were financed in part by the CCF. In August of 1963, Mphahlele followed up on his earlier suggestion, writing to Nakasa, Ulli Beier of *Black Orpheus*, Rajat Neogy of *Transition*, and Neville Rubin of *The New African* (also a recipient CCF funds) suggesting that the editors of these English-language journals of Africa cooperate in order to circulate material and avoid unnecessary duplication. Mphahlele acknowledged the independence of these publications but hoped that "a watertight fraternal agreement could be reached immediately."[319] Neogy responded to the group within the week suggesting nine points of cooperation that included rules governing reprinting rights, potential advertising arrangements, and the exchange of advanced contents lists between the editors of each magazine.[320] Possibly overwhelmed by the details of Neogy's proposal, Nakasa responded that while he favored closer cooperation between the publications, he

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[317] McDonald, 123. David Attwell, *Rewriting Modernity*, 111. Mbari is the Ibo word "used for a sacred building erected by the Ibos in honour of the creator goddess." As explained by Ulli Beier in an interview conducted by Lewis Nkosi for *The Classic*, Mbari buildings were made of mud and contained many life-size mud figures to represent everything on earth. After several years, this structure and the sculptures within would wash away with the rain. According to Beier, the artists would then begin construction of an entirely new Mbari, "the idea is that the creative process has got to be renewed all the time if a society as a whole is going to thrive" (*The Classic* 1, no. 4, 61).
[318] Letter Mphahlele to Nakasa, 28 Jun. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.
[319] Letter Mphahlele to Nakasa, Beier, Neogy, Rubin, and Mrs. Begum Hendrickse of Mbari, 5 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.
[320] Letter Neogy to Rubin, Beier, Mphahlele, and Nakasa, 12 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.

felt "that it might make the arrangement too complicated if there are too many rules about which story can be used when."[321] Nakasa was primarily concerned with the success of *The Classic* short story competition, writing to Neogy, "you will probably agree with me that in Africa there is a very limited amount of creative work being done" and if all the journals ran competitions, or there were strict rules regarding reprints, Nakasa feared that there would be a drought of the African writing of merit that he sought for his magazine.[322]

At some point in the summer of 1963, while these publishers were determining the relationship between their magazines, John Mander of the London magazine *Encounter*, another CCF financed publication, visited Nakasa and suggested that he open an Mbari Writer's club in Johannesburg.[323] Nakasa was initially open to this suggestion but was apparently unaware of the close connection between Farfield, the CCF, and Mbari. He wrote to Thompson, asking about the Foundation's relationship with Mbari and if it would be possible to raise money from American donors in the event that the Johannesburg Mbari was established.[324] Thompson responded positively to the idea of an Mbari club in Johannesburg, but cautioned Nakasa to focus on the magazine, establishing it firmly before moving to other projects.[325] Taking Thompson's advice, Nakasa wrote to Mphahlele, stating that if an Mbari Centre were established in Johannesburg it would

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[321] Letter Nakasa to Neogy, 21 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.
[322] Letter Nakasa to Neogy, 21 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.
[323] Letter Nakasa to Thompson, 11 Jul. and 5 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.
[324] Letter Nakasa to Thompson, 5 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.
[325] Letter Thompson to Nakasa, 13 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1. Mander's visit to Nakasa in the early stages of *The Classic* is interesting, if not suspicious, when considering that Lewis Nkosi's 1961 letter seems to indicate that Thompson was originally pushing for an Mbari-type writers' club, with the publication an afterthought, the mouthpiece of the organization.

have to be directed by another. Mphahlele deferred to Nakasa's decision, acknowledging the difficulty he faced in the city: "I'm sure you know best whether it can succeed in Joburg or not. Somehow I think of Joburg as such a vicious place that acts both as a spur of things and as a killer."[326]

What is to be made of this web of CIA funded publications into which Nakasa was drawn by his *Drum* colleagues? It is understandable that such English language journals published in Africa would seek to create bonds of cooperation; after all, literary magazines in Africa were notorious for their brief runs. Of primary importance when considering the patronage of these publications is the fact that the principle editors appeared to be unaware that they were receiving CIA funds and that the CCF did not seem to be exerting any discernable influence over them. In 1966, nine months after Nakasa's suicide, the CCF's connection to the CIA was exposed in a series of American newspapers articles. The *New York Times* first published a story in April of 1966 that linked the CCF and specifically *Encounter* to the CIA.[327] In the immediate two weeks following this revelation, the *New York Times* published several letters to the editor in which individuals associated with *Encounter* defended the independence of the magazine. Almost exactly one year later, the *New York Times* reported that the CCF had acknowledged receiving funds from the CIA and had begun an investigation into the matter.[328] In the context of African decolonization, the exposure of this CIA-CCF relationship had potentially serious consequences for the many publications and

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[326] Letter Mphahlele to Nakasa, 28 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1
[327] "Electronic Prying Grows," *New York Times*, Apr. 27, 1966. http://www.proquest.com.mutex.gmu.edu/ (accessed 12 Nov., 2010).
[328] "CIA Tie Confirmed by Cultural Group," *New York Times*, May 10, 1967. http://www.proquest.com.mutex.gmu.edu/ (accessed 12 Nov., 2010).

organizations, as well as their editors and employees, on the continent that relied on CCF or American philanthropic grants for survival.

In the August-September issue of *Transition*, Rajat Neogy reprinted an interview he had given to Tony Hall for the *Sunday Nation* in Nairobi. Neogy called the CIA's actions a "corruption of human rights" that exploited the integrity of his publication and caused him to feel "a great and helpless resentment at seeing one's work of more than five years tarred over by this CIA brush."[329] Neogy stressed *Transition*'s integrity and independence in response to Hall's questioning statement; "the CIA is not in the game for fun. It has helped overthrow governments and would surely not for long support any publication which even occasionally went against the fundamental interests of the United States as the CIA sees them?"[330] Mphahlele wrote an open letter to Neogy in the December 1967- January 1968 issue of *Transition* in which Mphahlele supported many of the points made by Neogy in Hall's interview. Mphahlele asserted that he had accepted his position at the CCF based on the premise that Africa would not be "turned into another theatre of the Cold War," and that any cultural activity in Africa "should not be expected to develop with reference to the reflexes of the West."[331] Mphahlele made it clear that the CCF did not impose its financial aid on any organization, and that Africans working with the assistance of the CCF had no knowledge that the money came from the CIA and that their activities would have been carried out regardless of the source of

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[329] "Rajat Neogy on the CIA." *Transition* 32 (Aug.-Sept. 1967): 45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934624 (accessed December 5, 2010).
[330] "Rajat Neogy on the CIA." *Transition* 32 (Aug.-Sept. 1967): 46. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934624 (accessed December 5, 2010).
[331] "Mphahlele on the CIA" *Transition* 34 (Dec. 1967- Jan. 1968): 5. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934219 (accessed December 5, 2010).

funding. Mphahlele compared the situation that he, Neogy, Beier, and others were in to that of someone who had discovered that an enemy had financed the excellent education they had received. Mphahlele then explained that many people accepted research grants from universities or government organizations without questioning where that money came from. Furthermore, Mphahlele stated, "it would be stupid to ask such questions, as long as one is satisfied that one is not compromising one's intellectual and moral integrity."[332] Of course, it is quite difficult to determine if one's integrity is being undermined if one refuses to ask such questions.

These somewhat defensive articles by Neogy and Mphahlele appear to be supported by *The Classic* and Nakasa's experience with Farfield. The collection of Nakasa's papers held at the University of the Witwatersrand contains many letters written between Nakasa and Thompson relating to the planning and financing of *The Classic*. In only one of these letters did Thompson directly discuss the material printed in the magazine, and his comments hardly seem like the sinister hand of the CIA at work. In August of 1963, Thompson wrote: "your fiction writers all seem to write in a direct naturalist tradition. Why? Is this a choice made consciously? Are they aware that this is only one way of writing, and not a very usual one today? Your poems seem to me often to be more concerned with making a statement than with making a poem: they could learn that even a statement is made best, made so that it really sticks, when the language and form are recognized as an important part of what is said." Thompson continued to suggest that Nakasa encourage his writers to compare South African writing with that

[332] Ibid.

being done in other countries, concluding "but of course there is no reason why you should be concerned only with literature by or about Negroes."[333] Thompson's letter seemed to support a contention of both Neogy and Mphahlele, that it was possible that those funding their publications (the CIA by way of CCF) were unaware of the contents of the magazines. If anything, Thompson's letter indicated that he was unfamiliar with Nakasa's literary philosophy and the subtlety he deployed in his *Drum* articles and *Rand Daily Mail* column. In Nakasa's reply, he mentioned a recent discussion between himself and Alan Paton in Durban. The consensus they reached was "that the tendencies of our writers will remain much the same until there has been a considerable tradition of writing in the country, which at the moment hardly exists."[334]

Considering the fond memories of *The Classic* held by later, more militant black writers, it appears that the magazine escaped the moral taint of the CCF scandal; however, Neogy and *Transition* were not as lucky.[335] The office of the magazine in Kampala, Uganda was raided and Neogy was arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of espionage after the disclosure of CIA financing.[336] In defense of himself and *Transition*,

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[333] Letter Thompson to Nakasa, 13 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B3.

[334] Letter Nakasa to Thompson, 21 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B3. This concern with a tradition of South African writing would persist in the minds of writers who would later submit works to *New Classic* and *Staffrider*. In the critical essays of these magazines writers would question whether a tradition of South African writing truly existed, and if so, did they have an obligation to carry on this tradition or create literature that responded to their own immediate circumstances.

[335] In 1981, one year before he revived *The Classic* in a more militant, racially exclusive format, Jaki Seroke engaged Miriam Tlali, Sipho Sepamla, and Mothobi Mutloatse in a discussion of the state of South African literary production. In this interview, these prominent authors of the 1970s fondly recalled *The Classic* as a source of pride for them as young, aspiring black writers (*Staffrider* 4, no. 3 "Black Writers in South Africa," 41-3). The feelings of these writers clearly validate Mphahlele's statement about the effect of CCF funding, that it would be "dishonest to pretend the value of what has been achieved is morally tainted" by the involvement of the CIA ("Mphahlele on the CIA" *Transition* 34 (Dec. 1967- Jan. 1968): 5. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934219; accessed December 5, 2010).

[336] Saunders, 334, 407.

Neogy explained that after five issues, the magazine had run out of funds in 1962. He had solicited various international organizations for funding before he met Mphahlele at a writers' conference in Makerere University in Kampala that year. Mphahlele and the CCF were appealing as donors because they already had a substantial portfolio in Africa, supporting the Nigerian Mbari club, *Black Orpheus*, *The New African*, and *Africa South*. Neogy stated very clearly in his interview, "I mention this because it is important to know that we first approached the Congress for help, and not the other way around, as has been suggested in some quarters."[337] Here there is a major difference between *Transition* and *The Classic*. Through Nkosi, Thompson had approached Nakasa with the idea of a magazine. In addition to funding Nakasa's magazine, Thompson arranged for Farfield to pay Nakasa a salary after he quit his position at *Drum* in order to fully devote himself to *The Classic*.[338] Neogy wrote that after the revelation of CIA funding he slipped into a serious two month depression that came from being smeared by something of which he was unaware and for which he was unprepared. Nakasa had taken his own life nine months before the connection between the CIA and the CCF was made public. It is

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[337] "Rajat Neogy on the CIA." *Transition* 32 (Aug.-Sept. 1967): 45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2934624 (accessed December 5, 2010).

[338] In a letter dated 11 July 1963, Thompson was informed by Nakasa that he had quit his position at *Drum* in order to focus on *The Classic* and study for his matric through correspondence. Thompson wrote back the next month inquiring as to how Nakasa planned to support himself. Nakasa replied a week later that he still maintained *The Classic* office in the *Drum* building, but now free-lanced for various newspapers. Nakasa admitted that this was a difficult position saying "I do not know for how long this will be possible, but I am not too worried at the moment because in any case I am planning to leave the country on some grant or other which I have been told reliably that I shall get." Thompson's immediate reply is almost humorous in the way his panicked writing jumps off the page. Perhaps hoping to guarantee a response, Thompson asked what Nakasa planned for *The Classic* by typing the question in the margin of the paper, running perpendicular to the text. As a way to ensure Nakasa's dedication to *The Classic*, Thompson proposed to Farfield that they allocate an extra monthly $200 stipend for the editor. This money reached Nakasa by the end of September, but Thompson's panic and immediate response to the thought of *The Classic* without Nakasa reveals how valuable this young black editor was to his American sponsor. WCHP A2696 B3.

chilling to consider how this sensitive young South African writer would have reacted to the revelation that the organization responsible for financially supporting him and making possible, perhaps the greatest accomplishments of his life, *The Classic* and a Nieman Fellowship, was actually a front for the CIA.

"I just want to go and breathe some fresh air before I'm too twisted to care about anything": Nakasa after *The Classic* and South Africa[339]

In 1964, Nakasa left South Africa to become a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University like his friend Lewis Nkosi had done five years earlier.[340] Nakasa eagerly wrote to Nieman curator, Dwight Sargent, that it should not be any trouble acquiring a passport in light of his apolitical past. Nakasa was clearly trying to placate Sargent who may not have understood that acquiring this document was a difficult task for black South Africans. In a series of letters written to contacts abroad in 1963, Nakasa expressed a less certain outlook, making tentative plans for travel as long as "officialdom favours me with that wretched little document the passport."[341] Refused a passport by the state, and two months late for the start of his Fellowship, the only way for Nakasa to take advantage of this opportunity was by following Nkosi's footsteps and accepting an exit permit acknowledging that he would never return to The Republic of South Africa or South West Africa as long as the present government ruled. Nadine Gordimer noted that Nakasa was reluctant to accept the exit permit despite his desire to study at Harvard which was driven by the need for "a wider intellectual context than the day-to-day,

[339] Letter Nakasa to Tom Hopkinson, 11 Dec. 1963. WCHP A2696 B2.
[340] Nakasa was selected as the second choice for this fellowship after D.K. Prosser of the Eastern Cape Herald, a white candidate, could not attend. "Ndazana Nathaniel Nakasa," South African History Online. http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/nakasa-nn.htm (accessed December 5, 2010).
[341] Letter Nakasa to John Rudd, 10 Aug. 1963. WCHP A2696 B2.

politically-orientated, Africa-centered one in which he had become a thinking person, and on which, so far, even his artistic judgments must be empirically based."[342] Gordimer recalled that Nakasa's decision to submit to exile occurred quite suddenly and years later when interviewed for the film *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere*, she regretted encouraging the young man to leave because the decision was just too final.[343] While the final decision may have been sudden, Nakasa had been contemplating leaving South Africa for some time. Throughout 1963, Nakasa wrote numerous letters to various friends and colleagues expressing a desire to leave the country. In one letter written to former *Drum* editor Tom Hopkinson late in 1963, Nakasa did not seem at all disturbed by the prospect of accepting an exit permit, viewing it as the natural price of his exodus.[344] It is hard to picture Nakasa as a naïve young man accepting exile without realizing the toll it could take. During the 1960s, Nakasa had been the connection to home maintained by such exiles as Can Themba, Bloke Modisane, and Es'kia Mphahlele. Nakasa's correspondence with these men reveals that he was aware of all that was denied those who were forced from their home country.[345]

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[342] *The Classic* 2, no. 1 (1966): 14.
[343] Patel ed., xxv; *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere*.
[344] In many of Nakasa's letters held at the William Cullen Library he writes to friends and associates that he has been considering leaving South Africa and that various friends have been urging him down this path. From these letters it is apparent that Nakasa had become disillusioned with apartheid life and prior to accepting the Nieman Fellowship he had explored several other avenues of foreign funding to finance his studies abroad. WCHP A2696 B2.
[345] Nakasa's papers at the William Cullen Library include letters written to Es'kia Mphahlele, Bloke Modisane, and Can Themba about incredibly personal things denied these men in exile. Themba pleaded with Nakasa for any news from Johannesburg. Modisane wrote to Nakasa asking for two penny whistles (B flat and G) that were unavailable in London, and in response Nakasa offered to send pictures of Modisane's daughter who had grown older in South Africa away from her father. Nakasa sent news to Mphahlele that his mother-in-law was gravely ill and urged that Mphahlele's wife Rebecca return immediately. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1.

Nakasa's time in Cambridge, and later New York, wore on him and he retreated into melancholy. In a year-end report to the Nieman curator, Nakasa described his inability to fit into the scholarly world; for him racial issues were far too personal to be dealt with in a detached and analytical manner.[346] One account has Nakasa, smelling of alcohol, challenging and berating a social psychologist for almost two hours.[347] These stories paint the picture of a man broken by exile. Far from the comforts of familiar communities, Nakasa was distraught by the examples of racism he found in the United States. For someone who considered the harsh racism of South Africa to be an aberration, traveling across the Atlantic to a supposed democratic and free country to witness a familiar brand of racism in the American south would certainly have gone a long way toward shattering Nakasa's perception of human nature. To a certain degree this dissatisfaction with the United States can be seen in Nakasa's writing.

After Nakasa completed his year at Harvard, he moved to New York City, taking up residence on Lenox Avenue in Harlem.[348] On July 13, 1965 Jack Thompson received a call from someone saying that Nakasa was despondent and talking about suicide. In an interview years later, Thompson was unable to remember who had called him, but it is possible that the caller was Hugh Masekela who told Detective Patrick Williams in a police interview that two weeks earlier Nakasa had said that he felt like killing himself

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[346] Ed Williams, "South African Fellowships," Under Nieman Foundation: History. http://nieman.harvard.edu/NiemanFoundation/AboutTheFoundation/History/SouthAfricanFellowships.aspx (accessed December 5, 2010).

[347] "Ndazana Nathaniel Nakasa," South African History Online. http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/nakasa-nn.htm (accessed December 5, 2010); *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere*.

[348] Nakasa had planned on writing a biography of South African singer Miriam Makeba. While at Harvard he had undertaken regular trips to New York City to visit Makeba and her husband Hugh Masekela.

"because he was finished."[349] Thompson arranged for Nakasa to spend the night at his apartment overlooking Central Park. Here, over a few drinks, Nakasa poured out his emotional and financial troubles to his friend, and during their three hour conversation Thompson tried to reassure Nakasa that his money problems could be worked out.[350] In *A Native of Nowhere*, when Thompson recalled that night he did not mention financial concerns, but that Nakasa's breakdown resulted from the fear that he had inherited his mother's mental illness. In Theo Zindela's book *Ndazana*, he stated that Nakasa's grandmother, who many believed had the powers of foresight, prophesized that one of the Nakasa children would inherit their mother's sickness.[351] Regardless of the details of Nakasa's final conversation, Thompson and his wife retired for the night confident that they had talked their friend out of his despondency. At approximately 9:10AM on the morning of July 14, Nakasa "jumped or fell" from an open window of Thompson's seventh floor apartment.[352] Thompson and his wife were awakened by noises from the street and looked out the window to discover the broken body of their friend on the pavement below. This mid-morning time of death changes the popularly held image of an inebriated Nakasa succumbing to late-night depression and leaping from Thompson's apartment into the early morning air. From Thompson's account it appears that Nakasa

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[349] New York City Police Complaint U.F. 61 # 4855. In Patel's preface to *The World of Nat Nakasa*, he quotes "a friend" who was told by Nakasa two days before he died that "I can't laugh anymore- and when I can't laugh I can't write" (Patel ed., xii). Given the similarity of statement, it is possible that Masekela was this unnamed friend.

[350] New York City Police Complaint U.F. 61 # 4855; Gordimer, "One Man Living Through it" *The Classic* 2, no. 1 (1966): 12. The details about financial trouble are from Ed Williams' article on the Nieman website, http://nieman.harvard.edu/NiemanFoundation/AboutTheFoundation/History/SouthAfricanFellowships.aspx (accessed December 5, 2010).

[351] Zindela, 9.

[352] New York City Police Complaint U.F. 61 # 4855.

went to sleep and did not stay up all night drinking. At 9:10AM, Nakasa's suicide becomes a more deliberate and determined gesture, rather than the passionate actions of a desperate man whose thinking was clouded by the effects of alcohol and the dark of night.

Nakasa's suicide was difficult for many in the New York community of South African exiles to believe. In Nadine Gordimer's memorial of Nakasa she stated that he talked with Thompson and his wife late into the night without mentioning suicidal thoughts or impulses; it is unclear where Gordimer got this information, and she may have been giving voice to the disbelief of many of Nakasa's friends who thought he was incapable of suicide.[353] One such friend recalled that Nakasa seemed happy two days prior, and Nakasa's brothers pointed to his strong Christian beliefs which forbade him from taking his own life. However, Detective Williams reported that he found no evidence of foul play and concluded that Nakasa had jumped. After Nakasa's brother Moses, who was studying at Oxford, was notified, the case was closed. The City of New York helped the exiled Nakasa defy one last apartheid regulation; for, although he did not enter the country with a South African passport, on his death certificate, in response to the question "of what country was the deceased a citizen at time of death?" it read: South Africa.[354] Nakasa was buried in Ferncliff Cemetery in Westchester Country, New York on July 17. During his funeral, fellow South African Miriam Makeba sang "The Faults of these Noble Men" in Zulu.[355] The tragedy for the Nakasa family would not be limited

[353] *The Classic* 2, no.1 (1966): 12.
[354] The City of New York Death Certificate # 156-65-114959.
[355] "Services are Held for African Writer," *New York Times*, July 17, 1965. http://www.proquest.com.mutex.gmu.edu/ (accessed December 5, 2010).

to the loss of their great son and literary pioneer. His younger brother Moses, whom Nat had cared for after his mother was institutionalized, was the only family member to attend the funeral, after which he was never seen nor heard from again.[356] In another tragic twist of fate for Nakasa's wider family of South African artists, Afrikaner poet Ingrid Jonker drowned herself in the ocean off Cape Town three days after Nakasa died. These two human beings, broken by the apartheid state, one in exile, the other at home seemed to personify the angst and frustration of both black and white characters illustrated in *The Classic*. Of these dual suicides, Playwright Athol Fugard wrote "we have paid again. Let us make no mistake; this was another instalment [sic] in the terrible price and South Africa- that profligate spender of human lives- paid it."[357] Nakasa's story is truly haunting, and while it seems to follow a twin trajectory that other artistic South Africans (particularly exiles) have traced, the trajectories of internal turmoil followed by self-destruction, it is worth considering how Nakasa's experience in the United States could be so different from that of his old friend, Lewis Nkosi. Only a few years prior, Nkosi had trod a path that Nakasa would follow, yet at some point these paths diverged, with Nkosi's leading to international literary acclaim while Nakasa's left him lying in an unadorned Ferncliff grave.

Eleven years after Nakasa's death, his childhood friend and fellow journalist, Obed Kunene tried to explain what may have happened to Nakasa in an article titled

[356] *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere*.
[357] *The Classic* 2, no. 1(1966): 78.

"Was Nat a Black Man who lost his way?"[358] Having recently returned from the United States where he participated in an educational and cultural exchange program, Kunene concluded that Nakasa had arrived in the United States just as African-Americans were beginning to embrace their black identity as a source of power and pride. Writing to Kunene at the end of the Nieman Fellowship, Nakasa described how African-Americans were fascinated with his Zulu heritage and that he was having trouble proving to them how much of a "Black brother" he was. In his article, Kunene quoted Nakasa's letter: "I regret now my indifference to all those Zulu books written by R.R.R. Dhlomo. You remember how I used to hate reading them at high school? Send me any book you can find dealing with Zulu history and written by *our people*, like Mr. Dhlomo."[359] This is a startling reversal in Nakasa's attitude, considering that fewer than three years earlier he authored a column titled "It is Difficult to Decide my Identity," and told the possibly autobiographical story of the black man who asked "WHO ARE MY PEOPLE?" By 1965, Nakasa must have found himself in an impossible situation; the cosmopolitan, multiracial lifestyle that had made him feel like "a native of nowhere" in South Africa and caused the apartheid state to expel him from the country also made him feel alienated and inadequate in the United States among African-Americans steeped in a Black Power to which he could not relate.

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[358] Obed Kunene, "Was Nat a Black Man who lost his way?"This article was loose in Nakasa's file at the William Cullen library without any indication of the newspaper from which it was clipped. Heather Margaret Acott cites Kunene's article in her dissertation and attributes it to the *Sunday Tribune*, 1976. Two years after writing this article Kunene would complete his own Nieman Fellowship in 1978. WCHP A2696 C.

[359] Kunene, "Was Nat a Black Man who lost his way?" *Sunday Tribune*, 1976. Emphasis added.

Nakasa's 1962 speech that was reprinted it in the first issue of *The Classic*, illustrates just how uncomfortable he must have been when meeting African-Americans eager to meet a genuine African "Black Brother." Nakasa began by recalling what he had been told by a friend prior to the event, "remember, you have a responsibility to the African people."[360] Nakasa responded with a statement that neatly summarized his self-perception as a man and an artist: "I am not speaking tonight as a representative of anybody at all. My intention is to let out a number of broad generalisations in human terms, based on my impressions of various things…this is simply a personal statement from me to you."[361] This statement makes clear the difficulty Nakasa would have faced in the United States, suddenly thrust into a representative role by inquisitive African-Americans. By refusing to accept his role as spokesman for the African people, Nakasa had reinforced his idea of the artist as an individual independent of popular expectations. However, this position also placed him in opposition to the race-consciousness of Black Power as well as the moral obligations of struggle felt by many later BC writers in South Africa.

Nakasa's own writing supports Kunene's conclusions to a degree. In the article "Mr. Nakasa goes to Harlem," written in 1965, and published in *The New York Times*, Nakasa described his experiences in the famous center of black culture, which he had imagined as an American Sophiatown. Although Malcolm X had an office in the building where Nakasa lived, the two never met. It is hard to imagine what their conversation would have been like, although possibly Malcolm X could have clarified

[360] Nat Nakasa, "Writing in South Africa," *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 56-63.
[361] *The Classic* 1, no. 1 (1963): 56.

some of the tenets of the Black Power movement for this South African writer, framing it as a positive movement that should be empowering rather than alienating. In his article, Nakasa recognized that Malcolm X stood "for brotherhood to those who offer friendship," and appreciated the public concessions made by this Black Power leader, "that not all whites are the same."[362] Nakasa expressed disappointment that not all the young black nationalists he encountered in Harlem were as nuanced in their assessment and automatically rejected all things white, including a South African journalist writing for the "white paper," the *New York Times*. Although Nakasa was uncomfortable with the "unapologising blacksmanship" exhibited by these nationalists, he was inspired by the positive strain of "blacksmanship" he found in the Schomberg Library where he read the writings of "distinguished black men" and saw busts of black men, "for the first time."[363]

After Nakasa's death, Mongane Serote, who was first published in *The Classic* in 1969 but had never met the magazine's founder, wrote of Nakasa: "Nat stood on a platform carpeted by whites for blacks, and to keep the platform Nat paid a painful price…He saw white liberals as perfect…His achievements as an artist were loudly applauded by the liberals, and that was the flame, Nat being the moth."[364] This comment should be considered in the heat of Black Consciousness, when the sellout was considered the most dangerous person in a black community. Years later, when interviewed for the film *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere,* Serote would temper his statement, saying that because Nakasa was searching for that elusive "good white," he

[362] Patel ed., 178.
[363] Ibid.
[364] Patel ed., xxvii-xxxii.

was considered a sellout by BC adherents who did not believe in this mythical creature. Serote continued to explain more charitably that Nakasa was actually ahead of his time as a rainbow man before the rainbow was accepted by the state or the people.[365] As harsh as Serote's earlier statement about Nakasa was, in the context of BC, he had a legitimate concern. Nakasa's response to Dennis Kiley, who in 1963 had criticized stories that focused on the miseries of being black in South Africa, demonstrates the difference between Nakasa and later BC writers. Nakasa said that contributors to *The Classic* would have to "regard themselves as writers first and black underdogs later."[366] For BC writers, their status as black underdogs was an inescapable influence on their writing. To ignore this status would be to acquiesce to the position ascribed to them by a racist white society.

When comparing Nakasa's attitudes toward race in South Africa to those that he began to exhibit in the United States, a picture of a man in transition emerges. In South

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[365] *Nat Nakasa: A Native of Nowhere*. This characterization, which has been repeated by numerous commentators, serves as an explanation for Nakasa's suicide: as a man ahead of his time Nakasa became despondent when faced with the realization that his perception of humanity did not match reality; the enlightened man cannot but be depressed when alone among barbarians. Considering Nakasa's final days, Serote's description of this young journalist as the original rainbow man has fairly disturbing implications for South Africa as a rainbow nation, but at this point it will suffice to question whether this is an appropriate epithet? Rather than paint Nakasa as a man so ahead of his time that he physically could not withstand the social currents of his day, it is more accurate to say that this young man was in the midst of a difficult transition and was overwhelmed without the support structures of family, friends, and familiar surroundings.

[366] Letter Nakasa to Kiley, 6 Nov. 1963. WCHP A2696 B1 file 1. A Letter from Lionel Abrahams to Nakasa echoes this point, "because you know the reservations I felt after reading the first issue of 'The Classic' I must let you know that No. 2 wipes them completely away. Congratulations! I think the new direction is the only right one for what can be our best literary magazine ever" 19 November. Tom Hopkinson, former *Drum* editor and director of International Press Institute, African Journalists' Training Scheme at the Royal College Nairobi noticed that the second issue of *The Classic* had a greater number of "'white' contents than the first number." 5 Dec. 1963. WCHP A2696 B2. One should keep this in mind when reading the 1982 *Staffrider* interview in which several BC writers commented on the changes in the content of *The Classic* that occurred when a white editor (Barney Simon) took over for Nakasa. From these letters it is clear that the inclusion of more white authors that was derided by BC writers was already well underway when Nakasa was editor. This should emphasize the fact that these writers were inspired by Nakasa's position as a black editor, rather than the literary direction he set for his publication.

Africa Nakasa recognized the power of his race as a signifier of identity, and yet rejected this aspect of his identity as a determinant in his art or lifestyle. In the United States, surrounded by Black Power, it became more difficult for Nakasa to maintain his non-racial stance. It is impossible to predict whether Nakasa would have held fast to his belief in an inclusive multiracial nationalism had he rejected the exit permit and remained in South Africa. However, had he stayed to see his continued efforts at conversing across the color bar thwarted by white deafness and then witnessed the watershed moment in South African history that took place in Soweto in June 1976, it is possible that he would have been forced to question his dedication to a "fringe" life. Perhaps Nakasa would have become more open to the racially exclusive ideas of BC that swept the country in the late 1960s and 1970s. It is plausible to suggest that Nakasa's experience in the United States forced the writer to reconsider his dedication to multiracialism, and Kunene's correspondence with Nakasa indicates that he was already in the midst of a transition toward a more race-conscious worldview while in Harlem. It is quite likely that had he stayed in South Africa, Nakasa would have struggled to remain aloof from the empowerment of Black Consciousness and its attendant "cultural revolution" that was looming on the horizon of the 1960s.

5. *A Luta Continua*: Steve Biko and Black Consciousness[367]

Living in Harlem in the early 1960s, Nat Nakasa was unsettled by the "blacksmanship" exhibited by the young black nationalists he encountered in this center of black American culture. Although he felt distant from these young activists, Nakasa was able to admire the type of "blacksmanship" he found in the Schomberg library. Although he was committed to a multiracial "fringe" life, the editorial directive he left upon his departure from South Africa indicates that Nakasa recognized the importance of race as a compelling force driving social organizations and cultural expressions. In 1964, as Nakasa was preparing to accept his exit permit, he handed editorial duties for *The Classic* to Barney Simon and Casey Motsisi. Nakasa's intention was that Motsisi would eventually assume full editorial duties for the magazine, but in the event that he was unable or unwilling to act as sole editor of *The Classic*, Nakasa had asked Simon to find another suitable black editor.[368] Motsisi did leave *The Classic* shortly after Nakasa's departure, but Simon's search for a black editor to take Motsisi's place was hampered by

[367] *A Luta Continua* is Portuguese for "the struggle continues." This phrase was used by Frelimo (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) in their struggle for an independent Mozambique in the 1970s and carried great purchase and emotional power in South Africa as a phrase uttered by those who had been victorious over white oppression.

[368] This request illuminates the ambiguous nature of Nakasa's multiracial views. Clearly he was dedicated to creating literary bridges between South African writers of all races, and yet he also recognized and valued the positive psychological impact a black editor could have upon emerging black writers.

the vigorous suppression of black voices by the state throughout the 1960s.[369] Beginning his search after Nakasa's memorial issue in 1966, Simon stated that "virtually every black writer of quality and reputation was banned."[370] Shortly after the public exposure of the Congress for Cultural Freedom's (CCF) ties to the CIA, Farfield Foundation was dismantled and Simon found himself the steward of what little grant money remained. In 1971, the amount held by Simon was insufficient to publish another issue of *The Classic*, but he recalled "by this time I was determined to hand over to someone else. I set the money aside for whoever my successor would be."[371] After four years of waiting, Simon was able to fulfill his promise to Nakasa by passing the remaining grant money, enough for a single pared down issue, to Sipho Sepamla, a black poet who had been trained as a teacher at Pretoria Normal College.[372] Although Sepamla had never contributed to *The Classic,* he had read the magazine, admired the venture, and drawn inspiration from the publication. Simon made one request of the new editor, that he send a complimentary issue of the reincarnated magazine to each of *The Classic's* subscribers.[373]

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[369] Motsisi left *The Classic* in 1965 after the fourth issue because of several disputes with the trustees, not least of which was a conflict over his non-existent salary.

[370] Barney Simon, "My Years with *The Classic*: A Note." *English in Africa* 7 no. 2 (Sept., 1980): 78. In Mbulelo Mzamane's article "The 50's and Beyond: An Evaluation," he more forcefully describes the difficulty Simon faced in the wake of restrictive legislation like the Publications and Entertainments Act and the General Laws Amendment Act, saying that these laws had "led to a mass emigration of our political, cultural, and intellectual pace setters" (*New Classic* 4, 23).

[371] Barney Simon, "My Years with *The Classic*: A Note," *English in Africa* 7 no. 2 (Sept., 1980): 79.

[372] There is a remarkable lack of Sepamla's biographical information readily available. He passed away at the age of 74 in 2007. Many of his obituaries lack any real details of his life before he became known as one of the "Soweto Poets" in the 1970s.

[373] Sipho Sepamla, "A Note on *New Classic* and *S'ketsh*'" *English in Africa* 7 no. 2 (Sept., 1980): 51. According to Sepamla, this only amounted to thirty-five recipients, located mostly in the United States and Great Britain. These figures do not correspond to the number of issues that were being ordered by Nakasa. In Nakasa's papers at the William Cullen Library there are documents that suggest many libraries and institutions of higher learning around the world were receiving copies. Distribution of *The Classic* through bookshops may account for this discrepancy, but one hopes, in light of the amount of effort and correspondence Nakasa put into building a subscription base, that Sepamla received an incomplete list.

In fact it had not been Simon who had found this new black editor, but Sepamla who had approached Simon. Prior to receiving the remains of Nakasa's Farfield Grant, in May of 1975, Sepamla delivered a speech to the United States Information Service Writers' Seminar which he would later reprint in the third issue of his magazine, *New Classic*.[374] In this speech, Sepamla addressed the issue that had confounded Simon's search, decrying the "*lack of publishers* and *outlets*" for black writing, saying, "I know of no magazine today which is prepared to give an unknown, unheard-of Black writer a chance."[375] Sepamla acknowledged literary magazines like *Bolt*, *Contrast*, and *Ophir*, but stated, "they don't give one the sense of belonging which we got from *Classic*."[376] This sense of belonging was of critical importance to Sepamla who told his audience at the United States Information Service Writers' Seminar that for the writer, "*isolation is suicide*."[377] Claiming that he was ready to "move mountains" to start a magazine that would give hope to emerging young writers, Sepamla professed that he was "prepared to

[374] *New Classic* 3 (1976): 18-26. This speech was reprinted with the title: "The Black Writers in South Africa Today: Problems and Dilemmas."
[375] *New Classic* 3 (1976): 22. Emphasis in original.
[376] Ibid.
[377] *New Classic* 3 (1976): 24. Emphasis in original. As evidence of this belief, Sepamla belonged to three writers' groups in 1975. When he launched *New Classic*, Sepamla also inherited the editorial duties of the theater magazine *S'ketsh'* which had been established by Robert Kavanagh and Mango Tshabangu, both members of the collaborative arts group Experimental Theatre Workshop '71. *S'ketsh'* is described by Kavanagh as "the only journal outside the Black Consciousness movement which attacked the cultural domination of whites in the theatre and supported, albeit critically, the activities of Black Consciousness theatre organizations such as Mdali and Mihloti." *S'ketsh'* was financed by Robert Amato, a liberal industrialist who had established the Imita Players in East London and Sechaba Players in Cape Town. (Robert Kavanagh, *Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1985), 56).

start with a magazine that will be hand-produced."[378] Chastising the inaction of downtrodden black South Africans, Sepamla advised that "it is not enough to complain of White exploitation without showing an effort to meet the challenge presented by circumstances."[379] He then issued a challenge to other black writers: "we charge that publishers are ignorant of the Black market, yet we do nothing to meet the challenge. We grouse about having no outlet; yet we do nothing about providing an outlet for ourselves. I think it is about time we didn't see these impediments that we tend to place before our own paths…. Armed only with enthusiasm and a confidence that I must succeed, I'm going to start this magazine for writers. I know I can count on many aspirant Black writers for contributions."[380] After delivering this rousing speech, Sepamla began searching for financiers so that he would not have to hand-produce his publication. It was the poet and novelist Lionel Abrahams who suggested that Sepamla contact Simon in order to "pick up the scattered remains of *The Classic*."[381]

The type of "blacksmanship" exhibited in Sepamla's speech might have caused Nakasa some discomfort had he heard it in the 1960s. However, in the time since Nakasa had left South Africa, many young students and activists became swept up in a race-pride movement called Black Consciousness (BC) whose theorists had drawn inspiration from, among other places, the American Black Power movement. Of the many young black

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[378] *New Classic* 3 (1976): 22-23. This is in direct agreement with Mamphela Ramphele's somewhat idealist statement in an essay on BC and community development that the major achievements of Black Community Programmes (BCP) like the Zanempilo Community Health Centre were testament to the fact that a "determination to succeed ensured success." While Ramphele's and Sepamla's statements are both idealistic, they illustrate the self-determination and self-reliance that accompanied a BC mentality (Barney Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility: The Legacy of Steve Biko and Black Consciousness* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1991), 169).
[379] *New Classic* 3 (1976): 23.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Sepamla, "A Note on New Classic and S'ketsh'" *English in Africa* 7 no. 2 (Sept., 1980): 51.

South Africans who were involved in the BC movement, none were more articulate or inspirational than Bantu Stephen (Steve) Biko. Emphasizing the positive nature of BC in a 1971 paper, Biko described a goal of the movement: "it seeks to infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life."[382] Coming on the heels of the repression of the 1960s, this was a radically ambitious, even revolutionary goal for black South Africans. The success of Biko's enterprise, South African Students' Organisation (SASO) and the rapid dissemination across South African universities of the BC ideas about black pride, black solidarity, and black community improvement owe much to the charismatic man who was the philosophy's most powerful proponent.[383] Consequently, many of the differences between *The Classic* and *New Classic* can be attributed to the seismic cultural shift wrought by BC in South Africa.

In the 1970s, waves of black writers began to use their work as a way to popularize the principles of BC. The roots of this literary renaissance have been traced by South African writer and literary scholar Mbulelo Mzamane to the pages of *The Classic*. It may seem incredible that the CIA-financed magazine created by the "fringe"

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[382] Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like*, ed. Aelred Stubbs C.R., (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 49. This paper was written for a SASO leadership training course. These "formation schools" would be a key development in the SASO strategy which sought to decentralize leadership. Not only did this act as a buffer against state repression, but it helped build leadership skills and self-confidence among the members.

[383] For more on Biko see *I Write What I Like* for an invaluable collection of Biko's writings edited by Aelred Stubbs C.R. *Steve Biko: Black Consciousness in South Africa* is Biko's testimony at the 1976 trial of nine members of either Black People's Convention (BPC) or SASO that has been edited by Millard Arnold. This trial was held after Biko had been banned, so this testimony was an opportunity for him to legally defy his banning order and it constitutes his last public statements. Biko's testimony is an excellent depiction of BC philosophy, not simply through his words, but through the assertive, and dignified manner in which Biko responded to a hostile prosecutor. *Biko*, written by Donald Woods, is a personal account of Biko's life and an exposition of BC philosophy as described by a white friend who was once skeptical of the movement.

dwelling multiracialist Nat Nakasa became, within four short years, the launch pad for a BC literary revolution. However, one must not underestimate the intense and profound changes that occurred in South Africa between the 1950s of Nakasa and the Freedom Charter, and the 1970s of *New Classic* and SASO.[384] The following two chapters will engage the 1970s as a decade of transition in South Africa. This chapter will focus on the emergence of BC as a social, political, and cultural force that stimulated black activism in reaction to the supposed quiescence of the 1960s. This brief discussion of the philosophy of BC and its operational goals provides the context necessary to appreciate the boldness of *New Classic* and *Staffrider* as literary magazines catering to a new generation of South African writers. The next chapter will begin with a cursory overview of the Soweto Uprising of 1976, perhaps one of the most important incidents in modern South African history, and will end with an examination of the writing of *New Classic* as transitional literature that links *Staffrider* to the earlier publications of *The Classic* and *Drum*. The violence and trauma of the Soweto Uprising is also critical context for understanding the urgent tone of much of the writing featured in *New Classic* and *Staffrider*. The analysis of the writing in *New Classic* that follows would be incomplete without acknowledging the impact of Biko, BC, and Soweto on those who contributed to this magazine.

[384] Robert Kavanagh has discussed, in his groundbreaking book *Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa*, the changes from the *Drum* era writers, who operated in the multiracial environment Lewis Nkosi called "Bohemia" and Nat Nakasa named "fringe country," to the BC artists of the 1970s who would consider Nakasa (and possibly Nkosi) a sellout for his collaboration with white artists. Indeed, Kavanagh pointed to childhood friends Nkosi and Nakasa as members of one of the first multiracial collaborative theater groups, setting a precedent for later theater associations that would evolve under the influence of BC into strictly "black theatre" groups. Kavanagh attributed the creation of the first of these multiracial "town theatre" groups to "Athol Fugard, together with certain black intellectuals including Lewis Nkosi, Nat Nakasa, and Bloke Modisane" who produced the play *No-Good Friday* in 1958 (Kavanagh, 48; 59-83).

The significance of the 1960s in social and political histories of South Africa is far greater than the numerous examples of state brutality and repression that followed the Sharpeville-Langa incidents. This chapter positions this decade as a period of reevaluation and reassessment that was not limited to black political organization, but extended to black cultural enterprises including literary production and theater activity. In *Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa,* Robert Kavanagh described the "renaissance" of "town theatre" groups in the early 1970s as a reaction to the oppression of the 1960s.[385] In the wake of Sharpeville, state legislation "made the separation of races more effective" by prohibiting black theater groups from performing in white areas as well as barring black audiences from white theater productions.[386] Legally restricted to performing for black audiences, these players, musicians, and poets, many of whom were students and township youths, recognized the revolutionary potential of BC and began rejecting European ideas about artistic expression in favor of adapting or creating material that was "'relevant to the black experience' in South Africa."[387] If it is possible to draw a distinction between black performance artists and black students, then these

[385] Kavanagh, as well as Mzamane, reaches back into South African history to point out the predecessors of these revived performance art groups. Kavanagh begins with "Hottentot and Bushmen communities [that] possessed certain forms which included mime, music, dance, costume, props, make-up and ritual" (Kavanagh, 44). Mzamane stated that at "every conceivable occasion" organized by BC activists, such as funerals, memorials, and public or private meetings; "poetry was performed in the manner of Izibongo" (Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 184). As Liz Gunner and Mafika Gwala have stated in *Musho!: Zulu Popular Praises*, Izibongo, "as a form is also very responsive to social and historical pressures, and is open to ideological interpretation." This praise poetry was "primarily concerned with naming, identifying and therefore giving significance and substance to the named person or object" and as such it was "a genre that has been and still is extremely open to appropriation by those who had or wished to have access to political power and influence" (*Musho!*, 2,7). Here lies another potential cause for the emergence of poetry as the dominant medium of literary expression for urban black South Africans in the 1970s. Heeding Biko's call to create a "new and modern black culture," young black South Africans capitalized upon this flexible form of cultural expression.
[386] Kavanagh, 54, 51.
[387] Kavanagh, 53.

two groups responded in remarkably similar ways to the imposed segregation of apartheid, by coalescing around the concept of group solidarity and embracing increasingly radical ideas about confronting the state. Of course, there was no neat division between students and artists, and these young people most likely saw little difference between conscientisation through organized SASO meetings or informal Mdali (Music, Drama, Arts and Literature Institute) theater performances. This is clear in the bold proclamation of the June 1971 *SASO Newsletter*: "the cultural revolution has started. It is now, for the other theatre groups to examine themselves not as an isolated quantity but as a force that reacts within the community it serves…theater, for the time being, at least, must serve a dual purpose- to act as a didactic means and to present entertainment to the black people of South Africa."[388] Mzamane applied these sentiments of purpose and service to the activities of black writers, stating that they needed to write for black audiences in order to "liberate their people as much from white oppression as from their own selves: from the self-inflicted pain and suffering, and the senseless and devastating violence of the townships."[389] Here Mzamane echoed a major theme of the short stories in *Drum*: a longing for community that stemmed not only from a desire for legislative rights, but from the more immediate need for the basic human rights of safety and security. It was not until the stories in *New Classic* and *Staffrider* began linking the violence of the townships to specific apartheid policies that the fictional expressions of community solidarity that had been present in *Drum* and *The Classic* assumed overtly

[388] "The Theatre and Black South Africa," *SASO Newsletter* 1, no. 2 (Jun., 1971): 14. William Cullen Library Historical Papers (WCHP) A2176 file 9.
[389] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 183.

political meanings. Also, by placing an emphasis on the "self-inflicted" nature of black pain, the writing in *New Classic* and *Staffrider* situated black people as autonomous individuals, responsible, to a degree, for their own oppression, and yet still capable of lifting themselves out of this morass. The writing of the 1970s differed from that of *Drum* in the way it placed the responsibility for finding solutions to their problems directly on black people themselves.[390]

A retrospective analysis of many apartheid policies reveals a strange irony in the way the black population rebounded from the repressive actions of the state, often with renewed vigor in their pursuit of liberation. Of course, the positive moral conclusion that racist repression is a self-defeating action is easy to draw from the comfort of a library or classroom decades after the dangers of police bullets have passed. For black South Africans in the 1960s, freedom seemed a distant dream after the bannings of the African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), and the South African Communist Party (SACP). In reality, the effective suppression of the most influential black political organizations both provided the impetus and the space necessary for BC to become a force capable of threatening the very foundations of the Nationalist

[390] Kavanagh's description of BC black theater groups provides an interesting point on which to compare the magazines of this study. He states that in many performances by these groups, "the audience was to be presented with problems arising from their situation as members of an oppressed group and stimulated to solve them. Not only were problems to be presented but solutions, revolutionary solutions, were to be suggested" (Kavanagh, 164). The writers of *Drum* and *The Classic* illustrated many of the problems facing oppressed South Africans through their use of literary realism. *New Classic*, and later *Staffrider*, writers seemed to take this a step farther by deliberately addressing apartheid policies as the cause of these problems. In at least one *New Classic* story, "The Visit," which will be discussed in the next chapter, a revolutionary solution is revealed by the author.

government.[391] Prevented from openly identifying with the banned liberation organizations, black activists were confined under the umbrella of white organizations. This created a situation in which black people were desperate for authentic representation, and as black activists began to organize, they found themselves untethered from the ideological restraints of any established political organizations. These young activists would be free to tailor their organizations to the immediate economic, social, cultural, and psychological needs of black South Africans as they experienced them.

In his opening editorial for *New Classic*, Sepamla voiced the frustration of the 1960s, calling for "new and old voices" to speak out, because "the beat of our hearts is too strong for our silence to be true and real."[392] Announcing a major BC objective, Sepamla stated that it was time for South Africans to abolish the memory of their past blackness ("spoken for, thought about, and wheeled around") and to articulate a new

[391] It was actually the enthusiastic repression of these liberation organizations which gave Biko a glimpse of the inner workings of the apartheid security apparatus when he was only sixteen. Shortly after Biko had arrived at Lovedale Institution in 1963, his older brother Khaya (or Kaya, Stubb's spelling), who was at the same school, was arrested as a suspected member of Poqo, the armed group loosely attached to the PAC. Although he knew nothing about Poqo activities, Steve was arrested as well and interrogated about his political "friends." Accused of participating in subversive activities, this experience gave Biko a mild taste of what was in store for Khaya who would be held incommunicado for ten months (In *I Write What I Like*, Stubbs gives a year as the duration of Kaya's detention, 155; while Karis and Gerhart cite nine months, 93). Immediately after Steve's release, he was expelled from Lovedale despite his innocence. Being on the receiving end of arbitrary power "was a very bitter experience" Biko recalled, after which he began to develop an intense dislike for authority (*Bounds of Possibility*, 19). Biko missed a year of studies after his expulsion from Lovedale, and at the age of eighteen he went to boarding school at St. Francis College in Marianhill Natal. The absurdity of these accusations must have made an impression on Biko. In Molefe Pheto's own account of his detention in *And Night Fell*, he repeatedly marveled at the stupidity of his interrogators and the wild assumptions they made about his political activities. While Pheto, a member of the black theater group Mihloti and the cultural group Mdali, was admittedly involved in activities considered subversive by the apartheid state, he found that the evidence the Special Branch (SB) had against him was remarkably flimsy. Certainly the obtuse and brutish tactics of the Security Police were counterproductive, and were more effective in creating radicalized blacks than suppressing their activities.

[392] *New Classic* 1 (1975): 2.

definition of blackness on the pages of *New Classic*.[393] Writing over a decade after Nakasa, Sepamla was more cautious in calling for committed art, saying "too often we are made to assume that any piece of writing must be published because it says the obvious (that very way!) about the Black man's condition."[394] Like Nakasa, Sepamla was concerned with exhibiting quality South African writing; however, Sepamla cheekily disassociated himself with those who self-righteously sought to set the standard for "the art of writing (whatever that means!)."[395] In this editorial, Sepamla proposed holding writers' conferences, fearing that without a regular, free-flowing exchange of ideas, South African writers and their work would suffer. The importance Sepamla placed on cooperation between writers is clear in his 1980 article, "A Note on *New Classic* and *S'ketsh'*," in which he praised fellow writers Mbulelo Mzamane and Njabulo Ndebele for their unflinching support while Sepamla determined the editorial policy for *New Classic*.[396] As an editor, Sepamla was "bent on showing that the times of *The Classic* and the revived magazine were different," expressing that his "black experience in the arts"

[393] *New Classic* 1 (1975): 2.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Ibid.
[396] In a tribute to Sipho Sepamla, read at a memorial for the author who died in 2007, Mbulelo Mzamane commented on the assertion that he and Ndebele were sources of inspiration for Sepamla, saying "I don't know about all that because Bra Sid was generous in all things, including being generous with his compliments" (244). This memorial was reprinted as "The Life and Times of Sipho Sydney Sepamla: a tribute" in *Tydskrif vir letterkunde* 44 no. 2 (2007).

was something he had previously taken for granted.[397] "What remained" Sepamla continued "was the ability to articulate my thoughts and feelings. *New Classic* existed to manifest this part of the black man's life."[398] Despite Sepamla's emphasis on the "black experience," he stated in his editorial that *New Classic,* like *The Classic* before it, would accept quality writing from authors "regardless of skin-top."[399] Sepamla was wary of including token white writing which he felt would be as disingenuous as other literary magazines that printed the occasional black writer in order to declare themselves a non-racial publication. In his 1980 article, Sepamla clarified that "contributions from non-blacks had to satisfy my kind of existence first: an unfair prerequisite, perhaps, but absolutely understandable under the circumstances."[400] As a black editor seeking to provide a platform for literary expressions of the black experience, these editorial policies were derived from his own experience as a black South African. "Born of the life spelt out for my [sic] by the country," Sepamla recalled.[401] Although Sepamla was a generation older than the students who were members of SASO, the attitude he brought

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[397] Sepamla, "A Note," 82-83. Sepamla's desire to draw a distinction between *The Classic* and *New Classic* apparently was not recognized by all associated with the venture. In Nat Nakasa's papers held in the William Cullen Library at the University of the Witwatersrand, there is a folder that contains correspondence between Sepamla and Audrey Cobden, an editorial adviser to *The Classic* who had taken up distribution duties of *New Classic* in Natal. These letters were written between 1976 and 1978 and pertain to the difficulties of distributing a small literary magazine in South Africa. One letter was hand written by Sepamla on a piece of *The Classic* stationary and he had meticulously blacked out the *The* and replaced it with *New* as well as substituting his own name for Simon's as the editor (12 Dec. 1975). Despite this careful attention to detail, Cobden refers to Sepamla's publication as *The Classic* throughout her letters. WCHP A2696 B5.
[398] Sepamla, "A Note," 83.
[399] *New Classic* 3 (1976): 23.
[400] Sepamla, "A Note," 83.
[401] Ibid.

to his duty as editor of *New Classic* certainly resembles the assertiveness of the young activists associated with this organization.[402]

"We are in the position in which we are because of our skin": The emergence of South African Students' Organisation[403]

The resurrection of black political activity, the revival of black cultural enterprise, and the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in South Africa are inextricably linked to Steve Biko and the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) of which he was a founding member and the first president. Emphasizing self-reliance and solidarity among black South Africans, BC was a controversial social movement with revolutionary political implications. At the time, many South Africans were unsure what to make of the racially exclusive organizations that constituted the BCM. The BC rallying cry: "black man, you are on your own" seemed to evoke the spirit of Anton Lembede and the banned PAC, and yet SASO's and BC's incorporation of Indians and Coloureds under the label of "black" was a direct contradiction of the Africanist ideology espoused by Robert Sobukwe in the 1950s. In a 1971 paper, "The Definition of Black Consciousness," Biko explained that "being black is not a matter of pigmentation – being black is a reflection of a mental attitude." While BC adherents rejected the apartheid designated term "non-white" for themselves, Biko made it clear that "non-whites do

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[402] In his tribute, Mzamane stated that one of the ways Sepamla would be remembered was as "a forerunner of the post-Sharpeville cultural regeneration that presaged Black Consciousness" ("The Life and Times of Sipho Sydney Sepamla: a tribute," 241). Mzamane's conclusions are supported in the analysis of BC and *New Classic* which follows in this chapter and the next; however, care must be taken not to slip into a teleological explanation of these social, cultural, and political developments. While Mzamane speaks with a certain authority (as an eyewitness and participants in these events) further research is necessary to establish chronology and untangle the causes and effects of this "cultural regeneration" of the 1970s.
[403] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 25.

exist…and will continue to exist for quite a long time." "If one's aspiration is whiteness but his pigmentation makes attainment of this impossible, then that person is a non-white," Biko wrote, "any man who calls a white man 'baas', any man who serves in the police force or Security Branch is *ipso facto* a non-white. Black people – real black people – are those who can manage to hold their heads high in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man."[404]

The legacy of the BCM remains a difficult thing for scholars and politicians to classify. In his study of black political thought, C.R.D. Halisi proposes that "the success or failure of the BCM depend, in large measure, on whether it is viewed as a student vanguard organization or a more diffuse intellectual and cultural movement."[405] In their landmark study of black liberation politics, Thomas Karis and Gail Gerhart attribute this confused legacy to the fact that after the movement's peak, "no firm consensus prevailed among its original partisans regarding the significance of its philosophy."[406] Karis and Gerhart predicted that as long as South Africa remained a country committed to a "color-blind society" and black South Africans desired "a leadership role commensurate with their numbers," then all "retrospective assessments" of BC would be clouded by the

[404] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 48-49.
[405] Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 116.
[406] Karis and Gerhart, 90. Of course, the fact that the most eloquent articulator of BC, Steve Biko, was murdered in detention by security police in 1977 adds to the confusion of the legacy.

imperatives of contemporary political organizations.[407] In a 1991 essay on Biko's life, Lindy Wilson describes the political battle over BC as a "competition for symbolic resources."[408] Wilson explains the futility of this battle by pointing out that these competing organizations suffered from a "failure to understand that 'a way of life' cannot be appropriated."[409] At its most basic, this is exactly what BC sought to be, an attitude expressed through daily actions that reflected the recognition of the humanity of black people. The constant reiteration of the value of black life gave strength to BC adherents and placed the influence of this movement beyond the reach of even the most brutal methods employed by the state security forces. In a 2005 interview, BC activist Strinivasa "Strini" Moodley clearly articulated this point as he described having both his legs broken, and all of his teeth knocked out by a policeman's club while in detention. According to Moodley, one could withstand this excruciating pain only through mental strength and preparation. Recalling his experience, Moodley was fortified by his "belief in the fact that we as black people can deal with anything."[410] History was Moodley's inspiration, knowing that black people had "gone through the most tremendous hardships" was a conditioning factor that allowed him to survive the duration of this state

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[407] Ibid. In a 2005 interview, Strinivasa "Strini" Moodley, an influential early BC activist, spoke with bitterness about what he felt was the ANC's appropriation and manipulation of the legacy of BC and its role in the liberation struggle. When asked if he ever regretted not accepting a position in the post-1994 government, he said "I've been approached a thousand and one times. I looked it in the eye- and said, fuck you." Despite going through "bad patches," Moodley refused to play a part in the ANC government, disparaging the way "the ANC has rewritten the whole struggle…the way they want it to happen." Moodley concluded his interview: "from my point of view it's good BC has been written out of the struggle. Because if it was written in then we're part of the problem. Now we're still part of the solution" (Andile Mngxitama, Amanda Alexander , and Nigel C. Gibson, eds., *Biko Lives!: Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 274).
[408] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 10.
[409] Ibid.
[410] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 268.

sponsored torture.[411] Moodley was not sure what had given him, or his BC colleagues, the self-confidence to think that they could resist the overwhelming might of the apartheid state. He postulated that his status as a post-World War II child may have contributed to this powerful sense of individuality: "we grew up with the belief that we were no different from anybody else, and therefore we had the right to demand our right to be human beings. That's all it is. And once you understand that, in yourself, it's not about Marx or Lenin, or- it's about you."[412]

By placing the individual above ideology, BC theorists were afforded a flexibility that allowed them to draw inspiration from a variety of different liberation movements, tailoring the philosophy to fit the South African political situation and social landscape. Looking beyond their own borders, BC theorists drew inspiration from the writings of various African leaders who had agitated for independence across the continent, such as Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, and Léopold Sédar Senghor. The Algerian struggle for independence and the writings of Frantz Fanon also influenced the ways in which BC was conceptualized in South Africa. In the 1960s, students working toward a concept of BC imported ideas from across the Atlantic, adapting to the South African situation elements of the civil rights and Black Power movements in the United States, as well as Paulo Freire's writing on liberation education in Latin America. Much closer to home, in the 1970s the collapse of the Portuguese Empire and the revolutionary struggles of the

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[411] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 268.
[412] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 269. As Moodley reveals in his interview, the black individual is the foundation of Black Consciousness, but it is crucial that this individual recognize his/her place in a wider community, as Moodley does by acknowledging the strength he drew from the history of his community. His dedication to BC reveals the power of the philosophy, Moodley was classified by the state as an Indian but clearly he considered himself a member of a larger community of oppressed persons that would become "black" through BC.

MPLA and Frelimo (underwritten by the thoughts of Amílcar Cabral) served as an inspirational example of black people in Southern Africa overcoming white minority rule. The ideological flexibility of SASO, and more broadly BC, allowed it to selectively appropriate ideas, strategies, and organizational structures from these diverse movements. This flexibility, a likely contributing factor to BC's rapid spread among university students across the country, was a reaction to the rigid ideological nature of the ANC and PAC in the 1960s that inhibited the formation of a unified black liberation front. In his 1972 interview with Gerhart, Biko described the strategic roots of BC's flexibility, saying "there's no more PAC, there's no more ANC; there's just the struggle."[413] In Halisi's assessment, this desire to "construct black unity as a new culture of resistance - constituted simultaneously the most utopian and radical dimension of the Black Consciousness platform."[414] Biko continued to explain in his interview with Gerhart that the focus on a specific political party as a vehicle for liberation had arrested the progress of the struggle, "that's a problem with people who are in the struggle; they are so keyed-up, screwed up with this kind of nonsense: are you pro-this or pro-that."[415] For Biko and other young BC activists, the ideological difference between the PAC and ANC was an

[413] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 33.
[414] Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 114.
[415] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 33. At this point it is interesting to consider Biko's reading habits as he described them to Gerhart. Biko recognized that many SASO members joined the organization on the strength of material they had read, however Biko stated "personally, I do very little reading. I rarely finish a book, I always go to find something from a book" (*Biko Lives!*, 24). In this same way SASO and BC raided a wide variety of intellectuals, movements, and organizations to develop their operational strategies. Drawing on Paulo Friere's ideas about liberation education, Fanon's concept of cultural violence, Julius Nyerere's views on community, and Stokely Carmichael (now Kwame Ture) and Charles Hamilton's program of black assertiveness, among others, Biko was able to develop his student organization around the immediate needs of black people rather than any hard or fixed ideological tenet.

"intellectual debate" which held no meaning in "the eyes of the masses."[416] For the sake of unity, BC and SASO avoided emphasizing, in Biko's words: "so-called post-revolutionary society," preferring instead to work to "attach people to the idea of fighting for the social change."[417]

In a 1970 *SASO Newsletter,* Biko wrote a column titled "We Blacks" in which he justified the validity of BC in the context of the experiences of black people under apartheid. In this article, Biko did not want to address the material poverty of the black population, but instead thought "something should be said about spiritual poverty."[418] "The logic behind white domination is to prepare the black man for the subservient role in this country" Biko wrote, "to a large extent the evil-doers have succeeded in producing at the output end of their machine a kind of black man who is man only in form. This is the extent to which the process of dehumanisation has advanced."[419] Biko and his SASO colleagues began referring to the various legislative and security entities that constituted the apartheid state as "the system."[420] In Biko's eyes, the system had such a crushing effect that "all in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with

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[416] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 33.
[417] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 27. This was the essence of "Phase One" of BC's strategy for liberation, the conscientisation of black South Africans, raising their political awareness, as well as increasing their capacity for organization and coordinated action. "Phase Two" was considered to be the physical liberation of black South Africans.
[418] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 28. SASO and BC activists did not ignore the material poverty of black South Africans; however, they believed that psychological liberation was of primary importance. Without freeing themselves from inferiority and dependency complexes, black South Africans would not be able to take advantage of economic or legal independence.
[419] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 28.
[420] Karis and Gerhart elaborated on Biko's use of this term, stating that "'the system' was more than a damming epithet. The term suggested that apartheid had to be conceptualized as an interconnected web of relationships tying together the psychological and the physical, the economic and the political, the student realm and the perceptions taught to students regarding adult life" (Karis and Gerhat, 113).

sheepish timidity."[421] For BC activists, this was a critical obstacle in the quest for liberation. The inhuman mechanization of the system was the enemy; however, liberation would be impossible if black people were unable to conquer their "sheepish timidity" by refusing to act as a cog in the evil machine that was apartheid. This policy of "noncollaboration with government-sponsored institutions" was "central to Biko's understanding of the politics of internal opposition."[422] Biko felt it was necessary "to remind him [the black man] of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth."[423] Despite the implications of guilt, recognizing complicity was not meant to be a negative process; rather, BC was meant to be empowering, a positive experience that led to personal (and eventually national) liberation.

In 1966, however, when Biko enrolled in the University of Natal Non-European Medical School (UNNE or Wentworth) the only organizations open to black students were those with agendas set by the white students in leadership positions. At the time of Biko's admission, the University of Natal was one of only two universities in South

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[421] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 29.

[422] Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 118, 129. Halisi attributes Biko's understanding of noncollaboration "as a new theory of community-based protest" to the Non European Unity Movement (NEUM) which had popularized the tactic.

[423] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 29. This issue of complicity was a truly divisive issue. Many youth activists in the 1970s saw their parents and grandparents as complicit in their own oppression. According to Karis and Gerhart, to these young activists of the 1970s, "white arrogance, suffered for so long by their parents and teachers, seemed intolerable, as did the very meekness of the adult generation" (Karis and Gerhart, 166). For Biko and other SASO activists the most dangerous person in a community was a black person who cooperated with the apartheid regime. Termed a "non-white," this person would constitute the character of the sellout that was examined above in Doris Lessing's story "Outside the Ministry." This character will be discussed in greater detail below in *Staffrider* stories; however, for a non-fiction look at the attitude BC activists took toward these "non-whites" see Molefe Pheto's autobiography *And Night Fell*. Pheto's memoir describes his 281 day imprisonment and the language he uses to describe his black warders reveals the revulsion these men evoked in his mind.

Africa that was not completely segregated.[424] The Extension of the University Education Act of 1959 was responsible for expanding Bantu Education and segmenting the higher education of so-called non-Europeans into distinct institutions organized according to apartheid categories of ethnicity. The design for this policy was drawn from the historical phenomena of "self-segregation" by Afrikaners at the university level. This "self-segregation" had stimulated the growth of an Afrikaner national identity, and apartheid officials hoped to recreate this effect within each ethnic group, in the process preventing the growth of a wider "non-white" identity among university students.[425] These segregated universities became known as "bush" colleges among black South Africans because of their distance from urban centers. Similar to other programs subsumed under the umbrella of Bantu Education, this policy did not have the effect desired by the Nationalist party. Instead, material deficiencies and the conflicting messages of assimilation and retribalization stimulated a common feeling of resentment among the students directed at the predominantly Afrikaner faculty.[426] This sense of resentment quickly created bonds forged through the shared frustrations of students attending these "bush" colleges; however, communication between campuses was difficult because of the tight control maintained by university administrators in concert with the apartheid security apparatus. In the wake of the apartheid crackdown of the early 1960s, one of the few outlets left for the expression of grievances had been Student Representative Councils (SRCs) which connected universities to one another under the

[424] UNNE was located in Durban, but it was known as Wentworth, which was the area where African, Coloured, and Indian students lived, far from Durban, in an unusually racially mixed community.
[425] Karis and Gerhart, 90-91.
[426] These contradictions were manifested in the stipulation that lessons be taught in "native" languages, not English, while the students were forced to dress as "Europeans," wearing a necktie at all times.

National Union of South African Students (NUSAS).[427] University administrators often applied pressure to the SRCs to influence student activism, and on several "bush" college campuses, students refused to elect SRCs, fearing that their independence would be compromised.[428]

When Biko arrived at Wentworth he was eager to participate in NUSAS, which, along with the University Christian Movement (UCM) had emerged in the 1960s as a vocal opponent of apartheid and had attracted a following among black students.[429] Biko was one such student until he attended the 1967 NUSAS national conference at Rhodes University where he began to have doubts that this organization, under the leadership of white students, would be able to effectively represent the interests of their non-white members.[430] It was a conflict over housing arrangements that revealed to Biko that white students were reluctant to consider black opinions even when determining responses to apartheid policies that only affected black students.[431] He later told Gerhart in a 1972 interview that this was a moment of clarity, "I had made up my mind that this was a dead

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[427] Karis and Gerhart, 92.
[428] Although, Karis and Gerhart point out that "gains made through noncooperation were marginal and lay merely in depriving the authorities of whatever slight increase in legitimacy might be derived from channeling control through black intermediaries rather than exercising it directly" (Karis and Gerhart, 92). While potentially ineffective, this strategy illustrates how the specter of cooperation with apartheid policies was already influencing the decisions of black students.
[429] Karis and Gerhart, 93.
[430] Karis and Gerhart, 93-94. Biko had attended a NUSAS leadership training seminar in 1966. He had also attended the NUSAS national congress as an observer in 1966, and in 1967 and 1968 as a Wentworth delegate.
[431] Rhodes University had stipulated segregated housing for the congress and only allowed white delegates to stay on campus. The Wentworth delegation's immediate response was a proposal to adjourn the congress until a more suitable, nonracial, venue could be found. NUSAS instead voted to censure the university and continue with the congress.

organization; it wouldn't listen to us, and that no useful and forthright opinion can be expressed from the aegis of this organization."[432]

Immediately after this realization, Biko began to discuss his feelings with other black delegates and set the stage for a more direct confrontation with liberal white student organizations. At the NUSAS conference the next year, a dispute over a seventy-two hour permit law proved to be the catalyst that would drive Biko and others to form SASO as an exclusively non-white student organization.[433] To Gerhart, Biko related his reaction to white students' intransigence: "our approach was: good, you whites are now bullshitting us into accepting your logic and your analysis of the situation. In fact this decision should be ours, because we are the only people who carry passes; we need permits- you don't need them- so this is one time you should learn to listen."[434] In this instance, the deafness of white students pushed Biko to emphasize the need for blacks to

[432] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., Biko *Lives!*, 22.
[433] This permit law only allowed blacks within a white area for seventy-two hours, after which they had to leave the magisterial district. White students suggested that the black students take a walk across the border and then return for a fresh set of seventy-two hours. Biko and other black students suggested that since this was a national student organization, they should stick together. The black students would remain until the police arrived to make arrests, at that point the white students would lie on the ground in front of the vans. Biko related the conversation to Gerhart, "then we'll allow the police to do what they like with the blacks. You just lie there and don't move." According to Biko, this made the white students "hysterical." The white students' inability to perform the simple task of lying on the ground motionless made it perfectly clear to Biko and others that these white students, well intentioned as they may have been, were actually impediments to the process of black liberation (*Biko Lives!*, 22-23).
[434] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 22.

emerge from under the umbrella of liberal white groups and learn to speak and act on their own behalf.[435]

Biko explained to Gerhart the uproar SASO's formation caused among white students, as well as some African and Coloured students, saying "it had become a sine qua non that before you even started entering the arena of politics and fighting for social change you must be a nonracialist."[436] A "Communique" issued by SASO in 1969 addressed this concern, and documented both the objections to, and reasons for, creating a racially exclusive student organization that were discussed and debated at Marianhill. The second point in favor of SASO's formation as an organization that excluded whites read: "the alternative to meeting on a segregated platform is not meeting at all…This is in

[435] Biko saw a particular threat from white liberals, who had become accustomed to speaking for blacks since the banning of the national liberation organizations, saying that "they vacillate between the two worlds [white and black], verbalising all the complaints of the blacks beautifully while skillfully extracting what suits them from the exclusive pool of white privilege" (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 21). Under the guise of discussing a response to the seventy-two hour law, Biko called a meeting of all black student representatives for the following day. "The discussion on the 72 hour law took exactly ten minutes" Biko told Gerhart, as he disclosed the true purpose of the meeting, "we are here for constructive purposes. So this 72 hour law must be left aside, and we just walk across the border. Now let's begin to talk about our business as blacks." This was a brilliant strategic maneuver on Biko's part. He knew that many of his fellow black delegates accepted non-racialism as gospel. It took a dramatic demonstration of the reticence of liberal white students to confront apartheid regulations to illustrate what was "so simple" to Biko, that black people had been "taking a back seat in our own battle." Seeking to abandon their passive role, Biko issued a call for a conference "for blacks to talk about themselves." This all-black meeting was held in December 1968, at Marianhill where a draft of the proposed organization was drawn up, and in July 1969, South African Students' Organisation (SASO) was launched at The University of the North at Turfloop as a strictly non-white organization (*Biko Lives!*, 23; Karis and Gerhart, 95).

[436] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 25.

fact the ultimate goal of the 'divide et impera' policy."[437] The third point expressed the belief that blacks had been forced into this position: "meeting on a segregated platform because we cannot help it does not necessarily mean that we agree with segregation."[438] In 1970, Biko, as president of SASO, sent a letter to the SRC Presidents of English and Afrikaans language universities, as well as other student organizations in South Africa and abroad. In his letter, Biko introduced SASO to these universities and outlined its formation. With regard to the NUSAS conferences during which the idea for a black student organization was proposed, Biko wrote "it was felt that a time had come when blacks had to formulate their own thinking, unpolluted by ideas emanating from a group with lots at stake in the *status quo*."[439] Biko quoted the SASO "Communique," acknowledging the resentment that a "racially exclusive" body might provoke in a "racially sensitive country" like South Africa.[440] Clarifying SASO's position, Biko stated that "as a matter of principle, we would reject separation in a normal society, we have to

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[437] Karis and Gerhart, 461. "Divide et impera" was the British colonial strategy of "divide and rule." The SASO "Communique" stated that students at "bush" colleges were "isolated, not only physically but also intellectually" and the purpose of SASO was to bring these universities into "the orbit of interaction" (Karis and Gerhart, 460). Biko recognized that students could not lead the country to liberation and early in the organization's existence he began planning a sister organization of SASO that could count adults, migrant workers, university dropouts, and township youths as active members. Formally launched in 1972, The Black People's Convention (BPC) had been a year in the making. In 1971, a group of twenty-six black organizations met to discuss forming a confederation to represent black political aspirations and to work for economic and social development among black South Africans. The highly motivated and well organized SASO delegation that attended this meeting in Edendale was able to influence the conference and mold the BPC into a more politically oriented body based on the principles of BC. It was the hopes of Biko and other SASO leaders that the BPC would become the national organization whose responsibility it was to bring all oppressed South Africans into "the orbit of interaction."

[438] Karis and Gerhart, 461. Confusion over the "non-white" status of SASO actually afforded the organization a brief period of breathing room as apartheid officials tried to determine if these self-segregating students were a threat to the system of apartheid. It was not long before the state recognized the threat in SASO and BC; however, this small window allowed SASO to develop a leadership structure that was multi-pronged and flexible enough to respond to bannings and arrests.

[439] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 10. Emphasis in original.

[440] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 11.

take cognizance of the fact that ours is far from a normal society."[441] Biko concluded this letter: "SASO adopts the principle that blacks should work themselves into a powerful group so as to go forth and stake their rightful claim in the open society rather than to exercise power in some obscure part of the Kalahari. Hence this belies the belief that our withdrawal is an end in itself."[442]

SASO's withdrawal was not into an insular population of so-called "natives" or "Bantus." To Gerhart, Biko explained, "this is not a movement for Africans, not a movement for Indians, for Coloured people; it's a movement for people who are oppressed."[443] Biko recognized the truth in Lembede's belief that participation in power politics required a powerful base from which to operate, but by including all those oppressed by apartheid and committed to liberation, Biko's "racially exclusive"

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[441] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 12.

[442] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 16. This is a not-so subtle jab by Biko at the state homeland policy which promised blacks "independence" in impoverished rural areas, far from the economic centers of South Africa that owed their existence to the toils of black laborers. Biko's initial attacks were on white liberals; however, he quickly moved to reprimand blacks who would cooperate with the system, specifically blacks who cooperated with the Bantustan system. Biko's indication that the SASO withdrawal was not "an end in itself" illustrates the fact that BC was a process. "Phase One," the conscientisation of black university students and their work to spread this idea of BC to those outside the university system was a herculean task without a definite end point. Therefore, it was open to interpretation as to when it was appropriate to begin "Phase Two," the physical liberation of South Africa. It is possible to explain the difficult transition from "Phase One" to "Phase Two" by referencing Paulo Freire's strategy for liberation education from which Biko drew inspiration. Freire emphasized a true Praxis for education, that is, a process in which action and critical reflection must be intimately bound together. Freire stressed that in order to liberate the oppressed, the educator must assume the role of teacher-student, and in turn the people must act as student-teachers. Success relied on the oppressed recognizing their worth as humans through a program that was tailored to their individual situations. Hence, "Phase Two" was completely dependent on the results of "Phase One," which varied depending on local conditions. Therefore, plans for "Phase Two" could not be more than general outlines, the specific details of which would be determined by the status of local communities. See Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* for more on this process of helping people transform from "beings for others" to "beings for themselves."

[443] Mngxitama, Alexander, and Gibson, ed., *Biko Lives!*, 26. SASO's use of "black" as the inclusive term to describe all those oppressed by apartheid elicited a mixed reaction from Indians and Coloureds. Some felt that this was an opportunity to become accepted by the majority of South Africans as equals, while others feared a loss of privilege or cultural identity that might result from their incorporation as "blacks." BC offered Indians the chance to avoid the persecution experienced by their countrymen in Uganda under Idi Amin if South Africa ever freed itself from apartheid rule. For Coloureds this offered a solution to the identity crisis that resulted from their social status as people in-between, not fully accepted by Afrikaners despite a shared language and cultural ties (which kept them apart from black Africans), and yet legally privileged over the population of black Africans.

organization set itself apart from the Africanism of the PAC.[444] Biko addressed concerns over use of the term "black" in a 1970 *SASO Newsletter* titled "Who is Black?" "The essence of what I'm saying is that the term 'black' must be seen in its right context" Biko explained, "we are merely refusing to be regarded as non-persons and claim the right to be called positively. No one group is exclusively black. Instead, adopting a collective, positive outlook leads to the creation of a broader base which may be useful in time."[445] Speaking to fears of cultural assimilation, Biko wrote, "by all means be proud of your Indian heritage or your African culture but make sure that in looking around for someone to kick at, choose the fellow who is sitting on your neck."[446] In this article, Biko highlighted two major components of BC, empowerment, and solidarity. By asserting one's identity in a positive way (black as opposed to non-anything), the first step was taken to overcome the inferiority complex that was the tragic birthright of each black South African, reinforced through daily humiliations and exploitation. In his 1970 *SASO*

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[444] Halisi compares the commitment to populism of SASO and The American Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in *Black Political Thought*. Describing the BCM acceptance of intellectuals in Africa and the African Diaspora, Halisi notes that some critics thought Biko was imitating the American Black Power Movement. In contrast to the parochialism of African nationalist thought, Halisi explains, "black power politics does not limit itself to identification with a particular nation-state or even to Africa as a continent; people of African descent are called upon to seek empowerment wherever they find themselves and to fight racial oppression wherever it exists" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 122).

[445] Karis and Gerhart, 465. This "broader base" Biko speaks of reflects the elements of charterism that SASO and the BCM drew from the ANC. In the initial stages of BC, exclusion of whites was crucial to instilling self-confidence and self-reliance among blacks. Ultimately, SASO and the BCM recognized that whites were an integral part of South Africa who had a right to be a part of the nation. For a personal account of one white man's conversion from critic to supporter of BC, see Donald Woods' *Biko*. This incredible memoir of the liberal newspaper editor's personal relationship with Biko illustrates the complexity of his thoughts on, and practice of, race relations in South Africa.

[446] Karis and Gerhart, 465. With this witty phrase, Biko echoed the central theme in Es'kia Mphahlele's Lesane stories in *Drum*, that apartheid policies pressurized township life to such an extent that explosions of rage and violence were often misdirected toward those who were equally destitute. BC hoped to make people realize the common source of their miseries and create a unified front in the face of apartheid's attempted ethnic fragmentation.

Newsletter article, "Black Souls in White Skins?," Biko stressed the need for blacks to form a powerful, united front before integration could occur. Believing that true integration was impossible before the superiority complexes of whites and the inferiority complexes of blacks were broken down, Biko stated, "I am against the superior-inferior white-black stratification that makes the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil."[447] Biko made it clear in this essay that any integration should take place on the terms set by black people: "for one cannot escape the fact that the culture shared by the majority group in any given society must ultimately determine the broad direction taken by the joint culture of that society."[448]

Liberation then, in the eyes of Biko and SASO, required each and every black South African to overcome their inferiority complex and participate in the formation of a national (black) culture to which elements of other cultures (English and Afrikaner) could be incorporated as a nation of free and equal people. This monumental task required the rapid and widespread dissemination of the principles of BC beyond the population of politicized university students. SASO Formation Schools were one credible response to this challenge. These Formation Schools were essentially training seminars in which SASO members learned basic leadership skills that included methods for organizing and presiding over meetings, strategies for publicizing goals, and ways to create and distribute newsletters. The primary goal of Formation Schools was to train SASO members to train other students, thus conscientization could proceed at an exponential

[447] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 24.
[448] Ibid.

rate.[449] Although Formation Schools were created for existing SASO members, the impact made by these university students spread beyond the boundaries of their campuses. BC was not something to be confined to organized meetings; as an attitude and way of life it traveled with these students wherever they went and emerged through their daily activities and interactions.

"Small-scale, controlled conflict now, or massive, disorganised conflict later": Conscientisation through community development[450]

In 1972, Biko was expelled from Wentworth on the pretext of poor academic performance, and he found himself free to fully devote his time to the promotion of BC outside the nation's universities. In the beginning of 1972, Bennie Khoapa, a former YMCA social worker who had become the director of the newly formed Black Community Programmes (BCP) of the Special Programme for Christian Action in Society (Spro-cas 2) wrote to Biko and offered him the position of Field Worker on the

[449] Formation Schools were yet another example of Biko and SASO borrowing methods from other organizations. The structure of Formation Schools was borrowed from NUSAS, the student body from which SASO split. Biko himself maintained a close relationship with NUSAS president Neville Alexander after the formation of SASO and used the national student body as a template for many of SASO's procedural and organizational techniques. Biko only served as SASO president for one year, which became a precedent that was followed by later SASO presidents. This not only helped other students gain leadership skills, it protected SASO against attempts by the state to undermine its leadership through bannings and detentions. In addition to the rapidly rotating leadership, a shadow group of SASO executives were elected in secret so that upon the detention of acting leaders, these shadow executives could move into place.

[450] A note written by Peter Randall at the bottom of a copy of the Spro-cas 2 study aid: "Toward Social Change." WCHP A835 C4.

staff of BCP.[451] The total aim of Spro-cas 2 was "to support black initiative and assist whites to respond creatively to black initiative," thus it was divided into two distinct entities, BCP and White Consciousness Programmes (WCP).[452] Peter Randall was the director of Spro-cas 2, but he was only active in WCP, which operated from the Pharmacy House on Jorissen Street in Johannesburg. BCP, under Khoapa's directorship, was based in a church on Beatrice Street in Durban. Spro-cas 2 as an organization reflected the impact of BC on certain members of white communities who recognized the importance of encouraging black people to work for their own economic and social empowerment. Among other white South Africans who saw truth in the BC message, Randall recognized the impracticality of white minority rule and stressed the need for immediate action to change the apartheid system. If white people and the politicians who represented their interests failed to act, Randall foretold, "then change will come about

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[451] Letter Khoapa to Biko, 11 Jan. 1972. Biko assumed the position on 1 March 1972 and received R3,600 as payment for three-quarters of a year's employment. In August of 1972, John C. Rees, General Secretary of The South African Council of Churches wrote to Peter Randall expressing concerns about the addition of Biko to the BCP staff. Rees stated that he was made uncomfortable by Biko's identification with SASO, "an organisation which is not overtly Christian at this stage." Rees continued to explain that "Mr. Biko is an extremely strong man and in my opinion much stronger than Bennie [Khoapa] and frankly I am worried as to who is going to do the leading in this programme now." To support his concerns, Rees cited a report he had received from a member of his own staff who had attended a BCP meeting and "indicated that Bennie was deferent in every aspect to Steve Biko." Randall's reply was not included in the Spro-cas papers held at the William Cullen Library; however, his reply most likely expressed that the goals of BCP were in line with many of the goals of SASO and the BCM, therefore the inclusion of the most adept BC theoretician on the BCP staff would only benefit the organization. In addition, if Randall was personally acquainted with Biko, then Randall would know that Biko was a man who consistently eschewed leadership roles that could foster a cult-of-personality which ran counter to the SASO objective of encouraging a diffuse leadership structure. WCHP A835 C9.

[452] Spro-cas 2 was created in 1972 as a follow-up initiative to the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (Spro-cas) which was formed as a joint project of the South African Council of Churches and the Christian Institute in 1968. Spro-cas consisted of six commissions that studied "the practical implications" of the Christian message "to the national life in the fields of education, social life, the economy, the Church, politics, and the Law." The termination of Spro-cas was set for 1972 and the results of each commission were published in book form. The results of these academic studies demonstrated the need for another project to actively seek solutions to the problems addressed in the Spro-cas reports. Thus, Spro-cas 2 was formed and given a mandate to operate from 1972 to 1973 ("Spro-what?" 20 Sept. 1972 Information Bulletin, 4. WCHP A835 C1).

forcibly and the vast sums of money spent on armaments may be put to an appalling use."[453]

In 1972, perhaps sensing an impending violent clash between angry black South Africans and an intransigent apartheid regime that seemed imminent, Peter Randall began diverting Spro-cas 2 funding away from the WCP toward BCP.[454] In a 1973 article,

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[453] Peter Randall "Helen Suzman Lecture for Equality in Education." 21 Jun. 1973. WCHP A835 C4. Like Randall, Afrikaner writer André Brink held similar fears about the explosive nature of apartheid society at the close of the 1960s. Brink expressed this in the first Spro-cas publication, *Anatomy of Apartheid* published in 1970. Asserting his belief in Albert Camus' "metaphysical concept of revolt," Brink reasoned that there came a point when violence was an appropriate remedy for an unjust social system, and "that to shrink from violence when it is imperative is not only cowardice but an act which strengthens the very system one tries to attack." Brink held out hope that South Africa was not beyond the point where meaningful change could mitigate the brewing anger of black South Africans, and placed responsibility for this change with white South Africans. Brink quoted Nat Nakasa, saying "most white South Africans have simply never opened their eyes to the reality of there being other human beings besides whites in this country. They do not 'do unto others', but unto an unidentified mass of Natives" (Randall ed., *Anatomy of Apartheid*, 31-36. WCHP A835 Ac). As a writer, it is not surprising that Brink saw culture as an important field on which to challenge apartheid, and his suggestion of a writers' conference to be held outside South Africa in order to include exiled voices indicated his belief in art as a potential political weapon. Brink would later repeat many of his concerns regarding the cultural stagnation in South Africa during a speech he delivered in 1973 that would be reprinted as the Spro-cas 2 background paper, "A Cultural Effort for Change." In this speech, Brink described South African society as one of violence, fear, isolation, and bondage for both the oppressed and the oppressor, "who is bound by the limitations of his own inhumanity." The focus of Brink's ire in this speech was the system of Bantu Education of which he said "there is not much to be commended about an education system which uses blatant indoctrination in order to ensure the survival of a nineteenth century concept of nationalism." Brink derived his solution to this problem from Jean-Paul Sartre's distinction between "gestures" and "acts." "A gesture is intended for an audience, but it is without practical or moral significance" explains Brink, "an act implies involvement, with the whole chain of cause and effect: it leads to something, it has a direct moral bearing on the situation in which it is performed." The urgent need for "acts" that could relieve the pressure apartheid placed on black people as opposed to empty "gestures" was the driving force behind the creation of Spro-cas 2 as an action-oriented organization ("A Cultural Effort for Change," Spro-cas 2 Background Paper. WCHP A835 Db).

[454] A violent clash may have seemed imminent due to the turmoil engulfing universities across the country in the wake of Abram Onkgopotse Tiro's incendiary graduation speech and consequent expulsion from the University of the North. In Tiro's fiery speech, he spoke the truth, which for him meant "practical reality." For Tiro, the reality was that Bantu Education (and apartheid more generally) was failing at the most basic level "because even those who recommend it strongly, as the only solution, to racial problems in South Africa, fail to adhere to the letter and spirit of the Policy." Tiro pointed to the fact that, at this allegedly Sotho, Tswana, Venda, and Tsonga university, the faculty was predominantly white, the vacation jobs were occupied by white students, the meat supply contract was given to a white company, and even the first rows of spectators at the graduation were reserved for white people. For asking whether blacks would ever get a "fair deal" in South Africa and urging students to assume "greater responsibilities in the liberation of our people," Tiro was expelled. Across the country black university students protested with demonstrations and boycotts of classes. Tiro's boldness and the quick solidarity expressed by university students undoubtedly owed much to the work done by SASO at these bush colleges. After his expulsion, Tiro briefly taught at Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto until he left South Africa for a teaching position in Botswana and was killed by a parcel bomb in 1974. "Student Protest: The Conflicting Polarities," Spro-cas 2 Background Paper. WCHP A835 Db.

Randall explained his belief that "BCPs are both potentially and actually the most important single aspect of Spro-cas, and the white staff have taken a deliberate decision to phase the white programmes out before the end of the project in favour of the black ones, if we are unable to meet our full budget requirements for the year."[455] Randall was not, however, downplaying the importance of WCP, stating in his article the urgent need "to recognise that we all are all part and parcel of a system of exploitation, and if we are white we inevitably enjoy the benefits of this whether we consciously wish to or not."[456] It was for this reason that Spro-cas 2 followed the example of SASO and separated the white and black programs, acknowledging that in South Africa, multiracial cooperation could hinder rather than help the struggle for black liberation.

BCP began operations with four stated goals: "to help the Black Community become aware of its own identity," "to help the Black Community to create a sense of its own power," "to enable the Black Community to organise itself, to analyse its own needs and problems and to mobilise its resources to meet its needs," and "to develop Black leadership capable of guiding the development of the Black Community."[457] Khoapa emphasized that in order for BCP to be effective, certain changes in black activism needed to be made: a shift from service to action, a diffusion of power, a move toward cooperative action, and a cession of doing things for the poor in favor of working with and under the direction of poor people. Khoapa recognized that these goals presupposed

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[455] "Spro-cas: Motivations and Assumptions," 2-3. In 1973 BCP's total share of the Spro-cas 2 budget jumped from 20% to 50%. A comparison of the Spro-cas 2 annual budgets appears to suggest that BCP outspent the total Spro-cas 2 budget in 1973. In 1972, BCP claimed R17,920 of the Spro-cas 2 total budget of R45,606. By 1973, BCP's share had grown to R50,300 while the Spro-cas 2 total remained at R45,000. These conflicting figures may account for BCP's transition to an independent body. WCHP A835 C1.
[456] "Spro-cas: Motivations and Assumptions," 3. WCHP A835 C1.
[457] "Black Community Programmes," Spro-cas 2 publication. WCHP A835 C1.

the existence of "a black community" and he proposed a strategy of communication, cooperation, and coordination to "create a consciousness of identity as communities" that would foster "unity, self-determination, collective work responsibility, [and] purpose and creativity."[458] In his memoir of Biko, Aelred Stubbs stated that although some more militant BC activists thought BCP was a waste of time, Biko "recognized the vital need to conscientise and thus politicise the masses by community development."[459] Crucial to the success of BCP, according to Khoapa was that direction be established by the communities and that those working under the guidance of BCP recognize that "the development of a specific project is less important than the development of the capacity of a people to establish the project."[460] Here lay one of the primary difficulties facing both BCP and SASO projects for community development: before progress could be made within these communities, the members of these imagined associations needed to first recognize and respect the coherence of their group. Two important influences on the development of the BCP operational strategy were Julius Nyerere's Arusha Declaration of 1967 based on the principles of Ujamaa, and Paulo Freire's philosophy of liberation education through developing consciousness.[461] Shortly after Biko joined BCP full-time, he and fifteen other activists made a trip to receive instruction and training from Anne Hope, a lay Catholic who was using Freire's teaching methods in Johannesburg and

[458] "Black Community Programmes" Spro-cas 2 publication. WCHP A835 C1.
[459] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 180-81.
[460] "Black Community Programmes" Spro-cas 2 publication. WCHP A835 C1.
[461] Nyerere's concept of Ujamaa was the foundation of a development program for Tanzania that was based on African Socialism, or communal living.

Swaziland.[462] One inherent difficulty of both Ujamaa and Freire's philosophy is that they are predicated on intense and intimate local interaction and as such, depended on a trusting relationship between members of the community and BCP activists. Beginning with a paid staff of five members, BCP initially required a significant number of people willing to dedicate considerable amounts of time and effort before any meaningful progress could be made toward the conscientisation of black South Africans.[463]

In 1991, one such volunteer, Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, a physician and companion of Biko who worked with him on the incredibly successful BCP project, the Zanempilo Community Health Centre, wrote "Empowerment and Symbols of Hope: Black Consciousness and Community Development" in which she assessed some of the strengths and weaknesses of the BCP strategy of conscientisation through community development.[464] As the driving motivation behind BCP and SASO community development projects, Dr. Ramphele stressed the loss of "self-confidence as a people" among black South Africans which resulted from "political impotence, induced state repression, and economic dependency, resulting from poverty and welfarism" in the wake

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[462] Hope conducted a five day training course followed by three weeks of observation and practice. Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 34-35, 155.

[463] This was the number of staff members in 1973, when BCP became an autonomous body. These members were: Director Bennie A. Khoapa; Secretary Hester Fortune; Field Workers Steve B. Biko and Bokwe Mafuna; and Assistant Samantha Moodley (Peter Randall, *A Taste of Power*, 131). According to the BCP budget proposals for 1973, it appears that the number of staff members rose to eight. The salaried positions listed on this proposal included a National Director and Secretary, and a Research Worker and Clerical Assistant for each of the regional offices in Durban, Johannesburg, and Cape Town (with combined total salaries of R23,080). Even if all the budgeted positions had been filled, BCP remained a small organization with ambitious nationwide goals. "Black Community Programmes Budget Proposals January-December, 1973." WCHP A835 C1.

[464] Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, "Empowerment and Symbols of Hope: Black Consciousness and Community Development" Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility* ,154-78.

of Sharpeville.[465] However the destitute conditions in some communities shocked these activists, Dr. Ramphele reported, "it put paid to the romanticism we as students had about poverty and people's responses to it."[466] "The idea of pulling oneself up by one's own boot-straps," she quipped, "presupposes that one has boots to wear in the first instance."[467] Additionally, Dr. Ramphele admitted that the young SASO and BCP activists held a romantic notion of "the people" as "democratic masses" that would respond positively to the BC message of self-reliance.[468] "A serious and costly error of the BCM," according to Dr. Ramphele, "was its failure to recognise that not all black people are necessarily committed to liberation and that the poor are not inherently egalitarian."[469] Failing to take into account the differentials of power within black communities meant that many SASO and BCP projects catered to the desires of the more educated, articulate, and economically powerful members of these communities. As a result, women and the more downtrodden members of the community often did not

[465] Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, "Empowerment and Symbols of Hope: Black Consciousness and Community Development," Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 156.
[466] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 159-60.
[467] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 170.
[468] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 172.
[469] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 178.

participate in these projects which they felt did not address their most pressing needs.[470]

Dr. Ramphele's assessment reveals why implementing Freire's method was of critical importance. According to Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the efforts of the "revolutionary educator" must "coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization."[471] This was, after all, the goal of the community-based work of SASO and BCP activists, to help other black people become conscious of their worth as humans and recognize how apartheid functioned to deny them their humanity. The key to Freire's method of "problem-posing education" was dialogue and communication, through which the one-way depositing of information from teacher to students crumbled as a mutually beneficial relationship between "teacher-student" and "students-teachers" was established.[472] This communication could not be limited to a town hall-style meeting which predictably would be dominated by individuals who

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[470] In 1988, Dr. Ramphele and Robert Thornton wrote an article titled "The Quest for Community" which was a more general analysis of the difficulty inherent in community development. Dr. Ramphele and Thornton qualified "community" as "a political term, perhaps *the* political term." Discussing the ways in which both the apartheid government and black liberation movements made use of this concept to further political aims, they noted the irony of the government's destruction of District Six, "a recognizable community" in order "to accommodate the ideology of 'community' held by government" that race and ethnicity were the primary determinants of the boundaries of a community. Ramphele and Thornton also acknowledged that the BCM used the term to refer to "wide sociopolitical groups" under the assumption "that a community of purpose always existed and that people representing a 'community' would act for the common good." According to Dr. Ramphele and Thornton, operating from the faulty assumption that "communities did in fact exist" was a cause of great frustration for many community development workers. Dr. Ramphele and Thornton did not dispute the existence of communities, "people believe in communities, desire communities, and act as if they exist even when they don't." The authors clarified that "the word 'community,' then, refers in a self-contradictory way to a belief and practice." For community activists then, "the problem is that we cannot infer the practice from the existence of the belief, that is, while the belief may be real enough, the reality may not reflect it." Therefore, it was the task of the community activist to harness an existing belief in community, or help to create a belief that could spur participation in development, thus augmenting the reality of the existence of an active, cooperative community. Emile Boonzaier and John Sharp eds. *South African Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts*. (Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988), 29-39.

[471] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 75. In the South African context, the revolutionary educator was very often a student, and the students in these particular relationships were members of the community.

[472] Freire, 80.

already exercised a degree of power within the community. Freire's method required a team of investigators to work together, engaging and observing the members of the community under varying conditions over a period of time in order to "decode" how the individual members function as a totality.[473] Many SASO and BCP community development activists were volunteers, students on term breaks who did not have the time necessary to immerse themselves in local community life. The frustration of many of these activists whose drives at conscientisation through literacy campaigns and public works projects floundered was offset by what Karis and Gerhart describe as the "subtler movement" of BC "onto the terrain of popular culture."[474]

"The Spear Lives On": Conscientisation through popular culture[475]

In C.R.D. Halisi's article "Biko and Black Consciousness Philosophy: An Interpretation," he acknowledges the "subtler movements" of BC and attributes it to Biko's belief that popular-culture could be used to reinvigorate the depressed masses of black South Africans.[476] In a 1971 address, Biko emphasized that since 1652, South

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[473] "During their visits, the investigators set their critical 'aim' on the area under study, as if it were for them an enormous, unique, living 'code' to be deciphered." Furthermore, Freire specified that the investigators should meet and critically discuss their "decoding essays." As each investigator presented his/her findings, the others would "'re-consider,' through the 'considerations' of others, their own previous 'consideration.'" The admirable thoroughness of this process was also incredibly time consuming (Freire, 111-12).
[474] Karis and Gerhart, 133.
[475] This phrase was the motto of People's Experimental Theatre (PET) and was printed on the cover of the first issue of their newsletter in Sept.-Oct., 1973. PET was a black theater group created in 1973 that enthusiastically embraced BC and the "metamorphises of the Blackman" through his "rejection and sloughing off the white life style foisted on him by whites and his acceptance of a meaningful life style shaped and experienced by him." "An Interview with PET" *peoples experimental theatre newsletter* 1 no. 1 (Sept.-Oct.): 15. WCHP A2176.
[476] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 109. In Halisi's book, *Black Political Thought*, he expands upon this thought, emphasizing that Biko considered a "transformation of consciousness" to be a critical precursor to "mass action." Comparing Biko and SASO to other student ideologies of the time, Halisi considered the most important aspects of Biko's political activity to be "culture, community, and the dimensions of everyday life" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 120).

Africans had been beset by an "Anglo-Boer Culture" that was "heavily equipped for conquest."[477] He did not believe that African culture was "time-bound," but that "under a normal situation," in the absence of a cultural assault, Africans could "contribute to the joint cultures of the communities they have joined" in a "process of acculturation."[478] This was not the case under colonialism and apartheid however, and the "culture of defiance, self-assertion and group pride and solidarity" that emerged from the "common experience of oppression" was "the new and modern black culture" which BC sought to promote through artistic expressions such as theater and literature.[479] In this essay, and more generally in the formulation of BC notions of culture, Biko looked to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* for inspiration. Fanon pointed out that the colonist could not be satisfied by simply dominating the colonized person, but a "perverted logic" drove the colonists' attempts to "distort," "disfigure," and "destroy" the past of the colonized people.[480] Essential to this "perverted" quest was the systematic destruction of the national culture, which, after an extended period under assault, became "an inventory of behavioral patterns, traditional costumes, and miscellaneous customs" lacking any "creativity" or "ebullience."[481] Therefore, Fanon stated, when the colonized intellectual looked to the past for a cultural base, he or she was looking at "what is irrelevant to the present."[482] Fanon's solution for "the colonized intellectual…who strives for cultural authenticity" was the recognition that "national truth is first and foremost the national

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[477] Biko, "Some African Cultural Concepts," *I Write What I Like*, 41.
[478] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 41, 45, 40.
[479] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 46.
[480] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 149. This is evidenced by the noxious version of South African history taught through Bantu Education.
[481] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 172.
[482] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 161.

reality."[483] The "national reality" under colonialism and apartheid was that of domination, which led Fanon to conclude that "one cannot divorce the combat for culture from the people's struggle for liberation."[484]

Drawing from Fanon's fusion of culture and liberation, Biko and other SASO members embraced a "new and modern black culture" as a method of addressing "the national reality" of apartheid oppression without appearing overtly political. In his essay, "Black Consciousness and The Quest for a True Humanity," Biko interpreted culture as "essentially the society's composite answer to the varied problems of life;" and as black people responded to the problems created by the apartheid system, their actions enhanced the "richness" of South African cultural heritage.[485] Biko continued to describe "the adoption of black theatre and drama" as "one such important innovation which we need to encourage and develop."[486] Biko and SASO were quite successful in promoting BC among black artists, and according to Lindy Wilson in an essay on Biko's life; the existence of groups like Experimental Theatre Workshop '71 was attributable to a SASO subculture that originated at universities across the country in the early 1970s.[487] Informal groups of artists as well as other, more structured cultural organizations formed under the auspices of SASO's General Student Councils (GSC) were dedicated to criticism, collaboration, and cooperation. They served as forums where young BC writers and musicians were guaranteed a responsive audience of their peers who

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[483] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 161.
[484] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 168.
[485] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 96.
[486] Ibid.
[487] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 28. Experimental Theatre Workshop '71 was collaborative theater group that created the magazine *S'ketsh',* and performed original material in the vernacular spoken on the Witwatersrand.

appreciated socially relevant art and could provide constructive criticism of the artist's work. Writers like Mafika Gwala, Mongane Serote, Njabulo Ndebele, Strini Moodley, and Saths Cooper worked alongside musicians to form artistically diverse theatre groups. Wilson described these collaborative ensembles as a society of "traveling players" who performed BC inspired material around the country in an effort to conscientise their audiences.[488] Additionally, traveling to townships across the country, performing original or adapted material to responsive audiences helped these players develop their own consciousness and enabled them to achieve a "global understanding" of the difficulties facing black communities in South Africa.[489]

In his article, "The Impact of Black Consciousness on Culture," Mbulelo Vizikhungo Mzamane, who lectured in English Literature at the University of Botswana and Swaziland in the late 1970s used the phrase "cultural renaissance" to describe the artistic exercises undertaken by these "traveling players" during the early 1970s.[490] In collaborative pieces of performance art, the renaissance poets described by Mzamane

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[488] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 28.

[489] Ibid. The potential of Wilson's "traveling players" to impact the liberation struggle in South Africa becomes even more significant when compared to the formative experiences of Amílcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau. Cabral's writing, and the successful campaign waged by his revolutionary organization PAIGC against Portuguese colonialism, were sources of inspiration for those active in the BCM. Basil Davidson, in the introduction to *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amílcar*, states that during Cabral's brief service as an agricultural engineer for the colonial regime he embarked on a two year agricultural survey of Guinea-Bissau during which "he studied his own country at the grass roots and came to know it better than anyone else." The results of this study and his "intimate and even unique knowledge of his country's peoples and their cultures, problems, [and] ways of life" provided Cabral with "the foundations of his theory of anti-colonial revolution and post-colonial development" (Amílcar Cabral, xiii). Cabral and Wilson's "traveling players" are examples of Freire's "teacher-student" and "students-teachers" relationships at work.

[490] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possiblity*, 181.

combined the rhythms of jazz with a so-called traditional African drum-beat.[491] This hybrid mix of modern and traditional music became "a prominent feature in the poetry recitals organized by Black Consciousness cultural activists such as Dashiki [poets], Mdali, Mihloti, TECON, and Joinery."[492] Mzamane prefaced his discussion of "the literary revival of the black consciousness era" by explaining how the bannings of the 1960s had affected literary production.[493] "The majority of writers of the Black Consciousness era began their work in a near vacuum" said Mzamane, "with few other works in circulation by older writers on which they could model their own writings."[494] Mzamane linked the cultural and political spheres, stating that prior to Biko and SASO,

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[491] In his essay, Mzamane is primarily concerned with the literary revival of poetry. There exists a fairly substantial body of scholarship on the BC poetry of the 1970s (see Chapman, *Soweto Poetry: Literary Perspectives*, 2007; McDonald, *The Literature Police*, 27-302; Attwell, *Rewriting Modernity*, 137-68). This thesis is concerned with the BC poets only insofar as the social forces which influenced their work also affected writers whose preferred medium was prose. Admittedly, in this case, drawing a firm distinction between prose writers and poets is a somewhat foolish exercise since many moved easily between the two literary forms (Mongane Serote, Sipho Sepamla, Mafika Gwala). It is possible that BC poets have received such scholarly attention because poetry, more so than prose, translated easily into public performance, readily accompanying music, dance, and visual art in the productions of the community art groups of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as acting as a powerful accompaniment to the funerals of so many young people who died violent deaths during these decades. See Liz Gunner's edited work *Politics and Performance: Theatre, Poetry and Song in Southern Africa* for a detailed analysis of this type of artistic collaboration. Specifically see Ian Steadman's "Towards Popular Theater in South Africa" 11-34, and Bhekizizwe Peterson's "Apartheid and the Political Imagination in Black South African Theatre" 35-54.

[492] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 181. The Dashiki Poets were a musical ensemble formed in 1969 just north of Pretoria. Mdali was formed in Johannesburg in 1972 as an umbrella group of other like-minded black artistic groups; Mihloti Black Theatre was influential in the formation of Mdali and its players often mingled with the audience after shows to exchange ideas; TECON is the acronym forTheatre Council of Natal, this group was formed in 1969 and did not survive the apartheid crackdown on BC organizations.

[493] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 182.

[494] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 179. Here Mzamane's statement requires some clarification. One should not assume that the apartheid state exerted total control over the transmission of ideas. Though censorship laws and their enforcement were stringent, copies of banned works were available to those who were willing to work for them. Mongane Serote recalled that he was able to read Mphahlele and others because "of the adventurous spirit I had. I found all sorts of ways to read this generation" (*Staffrider* 4 no. 1 (Apr.-May, 1981): 30). Karis and Gerhart also mention the inventive ways that BC driven students found banned texts to read and share with others (Karis and Gerhart, 106-7).

black organization on both of these fronts had reached a point of moribundity.[495] Just as this political stagnation forced Biko to explore new avenues toward black liberation, young writers in the 1970s, operating in Mzamane's "near vacuum," were not constrained by the legacy of a rigidly defined literary tradition and were free to experiment with literary form and content that was relevant to their desired audiences.

Popular culture as a vehicle for the expression of BC through theater groups like Mihloti seemed to possess an advantage over the organized conscientisation campaigns of BCP and SASO. Freire's method called for a communion between teacher and student, a reciprocal relationship in which the community members finds their own way to consciousness. This relationship eluded many BCP and SASO activists who, by inadvertently catering to the existing power structures, may have appeared to poor, uneducated urban and rural workers as elites determined to implement their policies on the community.[496] Artists, particularly those who participated in open collaborative groups, could avoid this stigma and create an atmosphere in which the audience felt comfortable participating in these ventures (by calling out during a dramatic production or identifying with a literary character).[497] Developing this type of comfortable relationship between black author and audience seemed to be at the heart of Sepamla's

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[495] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 180.

[496] Friere warned against approaching communities with projects or objectives in mind which did not take into account the worldview of the people (or, as was the case for many BCP and SASO activists, did not take into account the multiplicity of worldviews within a community). These activists "forget that their fundamental objective is to fight alongside the people for the recovery of the people's stolen humanity, not to 'win the people over' to their side. Such a phrase does not belong in the vocabulary of revolutionary leaders, but in that of the oppressor. The revolutionary's role is to liberate, and be liberated, with the people- not to win them over" (Freire, 95).

[497] Kavanagh illustrates this in his discussion of BC influenced "black theatre" groups whose "form emerged organically from the relation of the audience to the performers. This was not commercial theatre. The actors were not hired. They were angry members of a wronged community talking directly to others of that community about their common oppression" (Kavanagh, 166).

editorial policy for *New Classic*. He attempted to create a relationship, specifically with township readers, by including stories derived from the "black experience" in South Africa, and printing essays that introduced readers to some basic aspects of writing as an artistic expression and a political exercise.[498] In addition to selecting content to appeal to a township audience, Sepamla tried to make his magazine more accessible to these readers by controlling the selling price. These efforts would be expanded upon and carried out more successfully by *Staffrider*, the magazine that emerged during *New Classic's* last year in print.

Many BC activists saw great promise in the developments of popular culture in the 1970s. Formulating their attitudes based in part on the writings of Fanon who believed that prior to the liberation of an oppressed people, a "cultural revolution" was necessary to recover from the debilitating effects of the oppressors' "cultural invasion." Drawing also on the belief that true liberation could not be achieved without a consideration of culture, these activists heeded Freire's warning that "society cannot be reconstructed in a mechanistic fashion; the culture which is culturally recreated through revolution is the fundamental instrument for this reconstruction."[499] However, these cultural strategies were not shared by all who responded to the message of BC. Many who embraced Biko's call to assert themselves as humans seemed eager to act out Fanon's writing on violence rather than his ideas about culture, for "at the very moment when they discover their humanity, they begin to sharpen their weapons to secure its

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[498] *New Classic* 5 (1978). Lionel Abrahams, "On Short Story Writing," 15-18; and Bessie Head "Some Notes on Novel Writing," 30-32.
[499] Freire, 158.

victory."[500] Given how easily hope and optimism can lead to impatience, perhaps it should not be surprising that many BC adherents were eager to move beyond the psychological ground work of "Phase One" and begin "Phase Two" of the BC program through direct confrontation with the state.[501] While the young schoolchildren of Soweto were not impatient for a violent encounter with apartheid security forces, the impact of BC was such that when faced with state violence in the winter of 1976, these children were not willing to back down. The assertive, self-confidence exhibited by Sepamla in his opening editorial for *New Classic* was of the same breed as that which propelled the Soweto schoolchildren into the streets on June 16, 1976. Just as Sepamla was committed to taking action against the lacuna of publishing outlets for black writers, these young schoolchildren took charge when their parents failed to protect their right to a decent education. In Lindy Wilson's analysis, "the Biko generation inspired the culture of fearlessness. It was carried by the youth, a decade younger, in the 1976 uprising, when the government inadvertently strengthened that resolve by killing hundreds of young people."[502]

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[500] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 9.
[501] Fanon described in the first person the result of the "fundamental jolt" that came from the recognition that his life was worth as much as the colonist's: "his look can no longer strike fear into me or nail me to the spot and his voice can no longer petrify me. I am no longer uneasy in his presence. In reality, to hell with him. Not only does his presence no longer bother me, but I am already preparing to waylay him in such a way that soon he will have no other solution but to flee" (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 10).
[502] Pityana ed. et al., *Bounds of Possibility*, 76.

6. A "Rising Storm of Blackness": Soweto 1976 and *New Classic*, 1975-1978[503]

Sipho Sepamla is often categorized by literary critics as one of the "Soweto Poets," a name retroactively given to a group of poets who began voicing the anger and frustration of black South Africans in the 1970s. According to Michael Chapman, the work of these artists "charted not only the details of township life in its violence, poverty, alienation, and desperate need for a healing community, but provoked arguments and debate about the efficacy of the art product in contexts of socio-political urgency."[504] These poets who harnessed their verses to the outrage of a disposed and disenfranchised population were given the name that symbolized a breaking point. The Soweto Uprising of 1976 indicated that black patience and tolerance had limits, and the explosion of violence across the sprawling townships south of Johannesburg suggested that something within the black population had changed in the past sixteen years. Unlike Sharpeville and Langa in 1960, the swift execution of a program of brutal repression did little to quell the unrest which spread from township to township and took over a year to subside. In this comparative study, the above investigation of BC and Biko above works in tandem with the examination of Soweto that follows to provide the context through which the disparity between the writing of *Drum* and *Staffrider* can be understood. In this study, *New Classic* is a transitional publication, Biko and Soweto are critical influences on the

[503] Letter Sipho Sepamla to Audrey Cobden, 30 Mar. 1978. WCHP A2696 B5.
[504] Chapman, *Southern African Literatures*, 333.

organization of the magazine and the style of writing it featured. The writing of *New Classic*, and later *Staffrider*, is more confrontational that that which appeared in *The Classic* or *Drum*. The socio-political forces that drove young black South Africans to violence in 1976 did not respect the boundaries of some imagined artistic or cultural realm. As students responded to the intransigence of white apartheid officials, so too did writers and poets, gravitating toward any platforms from which they could exhibit their frustrations and disaffections, *New Classic* and *Staffrider* were two such platforms catering to young and inexperienced writers.

The immediate cause of the Soweto Uprising that began the morning of June 16, 1976 and the ensuing unrest that spread across the country, defying state attempts to reassert control for an entire year, was the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in 1975. This directive was a revival of the fifty-fifty rule that stipulated black African education be conducted equally in Afrikaans and English for Form One and Form Two students (grades 8 and 9).[505] For the students in Soweto this directive complicated the already dreadful education they were receiving under Bantu Education. In the 1960s, while South Africa was experiencing a period of impressive economic growth, the demands for skilled black labor prompted the authorities to increase enrollment in an already overburdened school system without providing a corresponding increase in resource allocation. By the mid-1970s, South Africa began suffering from an

[505] This policy had technically been on the books for years but during the 1950s many secondary schools had been granted exemptions. The revival of this policy was the result of conflicts within the Nationalist Party. Hardliners felt threatened by the increased cooperation between the Nationalist Party leadership and "Anglophone business interests." See Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle*, 158-64 for more on the implementation of this policy and the Bantu Education Department's obstinacy in refusing to listen to School Board warnings about rising student anger.

economic downturn and jobs previously held by skilled black workers were being given to unskilled white laborers. The increased competition for jobs led to a growing sense of frustration with the decrepit system of Bantu Education, reaching new heights with the implementation of the Afrikaans directive.[506] On a practical level the directive created a terrible situation in the classrooms with students trying to learn new material in a language that many barely understood, while being taught and evaluated by teachers who were often no more fluent in Afrikaans than their students.

In her recent scholarly study of the Soweto Uprising, *"I Saw a Nightmare…"Doing Violence to Memory: The Soweto Uprising, June 16, 1976* Helena Pohlandt-McCormick adeptly juggles the many competing and conflicting narratives of the tragic events that began that morning on Vilakazi Street. Central to Pohlandt-McCormick's study of Soweto is memory, both the intricacies of the individual mind's recollection of events, and the political imperatives which shape collective memory. Describing the uprising, Pohlandt-McCormick says "it has many storytellers and therefore, as one would expect, many versions or perspectives—depending on the political identity and purpose of its teller, and depending on the closeness of its teller—even at the time of its unfolding. It has two official perspectives—that of the apartheid government and that of the African National Congress (ANC) in exile—and the multiple

[506] According to Karis and Gerhart the scheduled "independence" of the Transkei in 1976 heightened frustrations among blacks. The Transkei was the first homeland to become "independent" and its constitution eliminated dual citizenship between the homeland and white South Africa. "For people being forced to adjust to new levels of economic insecurity, the added uncertainty of the new homeland citizenship regulations deepened an already widespread sense of despair" (Karis and Gerhart, 165).

perspectives of those who were part of the uprising or witnessed it firsthand."[507] Pohlandt-McCormick's untangling of these threads is necessary to reach her concluding argument, that BC as a resistance philosophy has been neglected in histories of the Soweto Uprising, most likely because of the Nationalist government's ruthlessly effective attempts to wipe out the official structures of the movement, as well as the ANC's dominance in creating the collective narrative of the events in Soweto.[508] In her study, Pohlandt-McCormick proposes that Black Consciousness had increased awareness among students that the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction was more than just another inconvenience of Bantu Education; it was an attempt by the Nationalist Party to make black South Africans, in the words of Biko, "perpetual students whose progress in the particular field can only be evaluated by him."[509]

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[507] Pohlandt-McCormick, *"I Saw a Nightmare…" Doing Violence to Memory: The Soweto Uprising, June 16, 1976* (Columbia University Press, Gutenberg-E), Chapter 1, 16. http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/index.html (accessed December 5, 2010). This version of Pohlandt-McCormick's book does not have page numbers and instead uses paragraph numbers which ae cited here.

[508] Pohlandt-McCormick, Chapter 1, 162. Pohlandt-McCormick's uses her investigation of individual student experiences to emphasize that the uprising was far more chaotic than the "coherent heroic collective story" created largely by the ANC. See also *Soweto 16 June 1976: Personal Accounts of the Uprising* for evidence of the incredible range of individual experiences before, during, and after June 16. Clive Glaser's *Bo-Tsotsi,* and Jonathan Hyslop's *The Classroom Struggle* also note BC's influence on the growing militancy of urban students in the 1970s.

[509] Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha. 5, 68; Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 94. Pohlandt-McCormick suggests shifting the issue of Afrikaans to a more central role in the re-telling of the story of the Soweto Uprising. Reviewing the five major analytical studies of the uprising (John Kane-Berman, *Black Revolt, White Reaction;* Baruch Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash;* Alan Brooks and Jeremy Brickhill, *Whirlwind Before the Storm;* John D.Brewer, *After Soweto: An Unfinished Journey*; and the government produced Cillié Report), Pohlandt-McCormick notes how each has acknowledged Afrikaans but quickly moved to place greater emphasis on other factors. Focusing on the issue of Afrikaans, Pohlandt-McCormick suggests, allows for a reevaluation of the importance of the BC as an "organizing power" that had found a "point of protest" with the Soweto students. Pohlandt-McCormick also warns that "if we do not take Afrikaans seriously then we do not take the students' intelligence seriously: They understood Afrikaans to be symbolic for the entire system of Bantu education… They understood the implications of its implementation as proof of the illegitimacy of the state and of an attempt to exclude them from the economy and the international world" (Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha.5, 96-7).

In *From Protest to Challenge*, Karis and Gerhart acknowledge BC as a factor that contributed to the Soweto uprising, describing the incident as an intersection between parallel currents in Secondary and Junior Secondary Soweto schools.[510] Junior Secondary school students were those most directly affected by the Afrikaans directive, and on May 17, 1976 the students at Phefeni Junior Secondary School initiated a Form One and Form Two class boycott.[511] These junior students were soon supported by senior students involved in South African Students' Movement (SASM) who convened a meeting in Orlando a week after the boycott began where the decision was made for a demonstration march in protest of the Afrikaans directive.[512] During this meeting an Action Committee was formed under the leadership of Tsietsi Mashinini to coordinate the march.[513] Many High School students who responded to SASO's message of BC and

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[510] Karis and Gerhart, 167.

[511] Harry Mashabela, *A People on The Boil: Reflections on June 16, 1976 and Beyond* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd. and Guyo Buguni, 2006), 20; Sifiso Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprisings: Counter-Memories of June 1976* (Randburg: Ravan Press, 1998), 3. Karis and Gerhart place the beginning of the official class boycott at Orlando West Junior Secondary School (Karis and Gerhart, 167). Sifiso Ndlovu's *Counter-Memories* contributes to the complexity of this momentous event. Ndlovu was a Form Two student in 1976 and his account seeks to place responsibility for the uprising with Junior Secondary school students rather than Senior students like Tsietsi Mashinini who were active in South African Student Movement (SASM). On the issue of Afrikaans, Ndlovu recalled, "I do not remember any liberation movement, such as the Black Consciousness Movement or the South African Student Movement contributing to our daily meetings and discussions" (Ndlovu, 7). On the class boycott, he stated that "the majority of senior students were very reactionary and perceived us as young upstarts and delinquents who were interfering and disturbing 'normal' school" (Ndlovu, 15).

[512] Karis and Gerhart attribute the popularity of BC among high school students to the efforts of SASO and BCP to create youth organizations as incubators for future political leaders. According to Karis and Gerhart, these efforts were so successful that "'thinking black' had become an 'in' thing among literate young Africans in the townships of the Witwatersrand and the eastern Cape" (Karis and Gerhart, 157).

[513] Karis and Gerhart, 167. Seth Mazibuko, a student at Orlando West Secondary School who had organized the boycott there, was also selected to lead the Action Committee with Mashinini. In the wake of the riots that followed the march, the Action Committee was transformed into the Soweto Student Representative Council (SSRC), a more permanent organization that drew two representatives from each Soweto school. Mazibuko would continue his activities as an influential student leader through this organization.

became involved with SASM were more eager to confront the structures of apartheid than SASO university students or older BPC members.[514]

Although these young SASM members were more militant, at times rebelling even against the established leadership of the BCM, the march organized for June 16 was to be a peaceful demonstration of students marching from school to school, gathering participants along the way and proceeding to Orlando Stadium where they would issue demands to the authorities, one of which would be the elimination of the Afrikaans directive, and student leaders like Mashinini would address the gathered students before they went home.[515] This was not to be the case, since the crowd of singing students, carrying homemade placards and giving the black power raised fist salute, had swelled well into the thousands by 10:30 AM and attracted the attention of police who moved to intercept and disperse the growing crowd.[516] According to Pohlandt-McCormick, "the versions of this story," of the confrontation between the police and students near Orlando West High School "are so numerous and so varied that they give the illusion of detail and accuracy, they become impossible here to parse out and it will forever remain difficult,

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[514] Karis and Gerhart rightly credit the successful liberation struggle in Mozambique and the country's imminent independence in 1975 with creating a confrontational attitude among high school students: "preoccupation with 'phase two' dimmed the enthusiasm of youthful recruits for the patient tactics designed a few years earlier to spread the philosophy of black consciousness" (Karis and Gerhart, 158).
[515] Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha. 2, 1-25. Pohlandt-McCormick quotes a male student who addressed the crowd as they reached Orlando High School: "Brothers and sisters, I appeal to you to keep calm and cool. We have just received a report that the police are coming. Please do not taunt them, do not do anything to them, just be cool and calm because we do not know what they are after. We are not fighting" (Cha. 2, 26).
[516] Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha. 2, 27-31. Pohlandt-McCormick describes the homemade placards as "simple" but "their language was incendiary: 'Black Power, We Want Vorster Soon,' 'Voster (sic) and Kruger must go to Hell,' 'Black Power, Free Mandela.'" Pohlandt-McCormick cites these placards as an indication that the students linked their struggle against Afrikaans to the wider struggle against apartheid policies.

perhaps impossible, to re-collect 'what really happened.'"[517] While the exact sequence of events may be impossible to determine, it is clear that the police were unable to get the schoolchildren to disband; teargas, baton charges, and police dogs were all ineffective in breaking the will of the students.[518] Whether the students threw stones first, or the police fired into the crowd first is largely irrelevant; this unarmed crowd of students agitating for a better system of education stood their ground when confronted by heavily armed police officers.[519] After a volley of rifle and pistol fire was shot directly into the crowd of schoolchildren, Hastings Ndlovu, and Zolile Hector Pieterson lay dead, and the crowd of students scattered for the moment.[520] When the students regrouped, they were no longer peaceful. Pohlandt-McCormick described the escalation of events "as if, barely buried

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[517] Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha. 5, 33.

[518] The crowd of students killed one of these police dogs. Pohlandt-McCormick quoted a police officer who described this incident: "a black police dog whipped past me and overwhelmed one of the Bantu boys. The crowd turned around to help their friend and pelted the dog with stones" (Cha. 5, 47). In his *counter-memories of 1976,* Ndlovu opens by explaining many of the student's attitudes toward dogs, "for us in the black community, the dog was a symbol of police power, brutality and the contempt of white supremacists for black people's dignity and life" (Ndlovu, 1). For the police, the killing of this dog, a symbol of police power, would have certainly escalated the already tense situation in which they found themselves. In her account of the uprising, Pohlandt-McCormick makes extensive use of the evidence presented during the Commission of Enquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere from the 16th of June 1976 to the 28th of February 1977 which was chaired by Supreme Court Judge Cillié. Pohlandt-McCormick makes it clear that the report issued by the commission in 1980 does not accurately reflect the testimonies and raw data collected by the commission. Previous scholars who have cited the Cillié Commission have used the finished report; Pohlandt-McCormick was the first historian to view these documents since the commission finished its work in 1978. This raw data is extensive due to the unprecedented power given to the police to raid suspected participants' homes or offices to gather evidence for the commission.

[519] Pohlandt-McCormick would dispute this claim, as she stated that "the importance of who was responsible for the first violence cannot be underestimated, both in terms of culpability or justification and for the condemnation or respect of memory" (Cha. 2,162). Despite "the reassurance that clarity might provide," the international condemnation that followed Soweto, as well as the reactions of black, and many white, South Africans suggest that in a contest between stones and bullets, the question of who struck first loses some of its significance.

[520] Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha. 2, 50-79. Hector Pieterson was pronounced dead at the Phefeni Clinic. Another student, Mbuyisa Makhubu had picked Pieterson's body off the street and carried him until *Rand Daily Mail* reporter Sophie Tema stopped her car and had her driver take Makhubu, Pieterson, and his sister Antoinette Musi to the clinic. Sam Nzima's iconic photo of Makhubu running from the police carrying Pieterson's limp body while his sister runs alongside them, hands raised in anguish became internationally circulated as a raw symbol of the sheer brutality of the events of June 16.

under the dust of the streets, a network of incendiary fuses carried the terrible knowledge everywhere in Soweto: 'a White man … [h]ad killed a child, a Black child.'"[521] The immense crowd that had began the day intent to discuss their grievances with Bantu Administration authorities abandoned all hope for verbal communication and instead settled for physical expressions of their rage directed at whatever symbols of white power could be found.[522]

That evening in Soweto as thousands of workers returned home they were shocked to find the police waging a war against township children who refused to be pacified by the violence of the authorities.[523] The next morning, the uprising began to

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[521] Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha. 2, 79.

[522] As the students fanned out throughout Soweto, offices and institutions of the West Rand Administration Board (WRAB), including beer halls and bottle stores, became targets for angry students. In total, "114 beer halls and 74 bottle stores, all properties of the Bantu Administration Board" were destroyed and looted (Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha. 2, 109). See Pohlandt-McCormick's essay "Beer Halls and Bottle Stores" which accompanies her Gutenberg-E version of "*I Saw a Nightmare….*" In this essay, Pohlandt-McCormick adeptly deals with this interesting aspect of the uprising. In 1976 and 1977, the WRAB derived 20.75 % of its income from the sale of beer and liquor, over which it had a monopoly. Pohlandt-McCormick cites several young students' eloquent testimony in which they rejected the WRAB's use of liquor profits to build schools and playgrounds, and instead focused on alcohol as a scourge of the townships particularly among their parents' generation. The students also spoke against the shebeen culture as equally detrimental to the lives of township families. This line of reasoning was generally rejected by the Cillié Commission as "far too pious." The commission heard testimony from government officials who sought to explain the looting of bottle stores and drunkenness of many of the rioters as evidence of the influence of a criminal element or adult agitators. By suggesting that the crowd was overrun with tsotsis bent on violence and vandalism, or that "outside agitators" had given alcohol to the students early in the day, the authorities, in Pohlandt-McCormick's estimation, were reducing the legitimacy of student grievances and underestimating them as a political force. One conclusion reached by the Cillié Commission was that the police were not properly prepared to communicate with the crowd of students. The commission did not, however, expand this conclusion to cover the period before the uprising, during which student frustrations were clearly voiced, nor did the commission apply this conclusion to its own study, preferring instead to rely on the always useful "outside agitator" rather than seriously address the legitimate and widespread anger of black township dwellers. Pohlandt-McCormick notes that throughout the day the composition of the crowd, as well as its mood had changed, but the conclusion that other township residents who joined the angry students were directing the violence and vandalism is not supported by evidence.

[523] In Pohlandt-McCormick's work she discusses the generational dynamic at work in Soweto. The reaction of parents to the uprising was not at all uniform. Fear for their children's safety was one common thread, but how parents responded to this fear varied with some parents finding their children in the streets to give them a hiding, while others actively supported the children's efforts against the police.

spread to other townships and universities across South Africa, while the situation in Soweto became increasingly savage as authorities attempted to reestablish control at any cost.[524] Five days into the unrest, 124 people had been killed, and this number would rise significantly as the violence spread across the country.[525] The explosive events in Soweto, 1976, radicalized many South Africans.[526] Once again, the apartheid regime had used lethal force to suppress a peaceful crowd agitating for basic human rights. The traumatic events of June 1976 and the immediate aftermath solidified the conviction of many black South Africans that the apartheid state only understood the language of violence. For these people, Fanon's words in *The Wretched of the Earth* rang true, "the colonist has always shown them [the colonized] the path they should follow to liberation."[527] The daily physical and psychological violence experienced by black South Africans had been turned against "the system" by the schoolchildren of Soweto. In the wake of the riots, as the state frantically flailed about trying to reestablish control over the

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[524] The statements of individual participants such as those presented in Pohlandt-McCormick's book as well as *Soweto 16 June 1976: Personal Accounts of the Uprising* provide a sense of the chaos that followed the initial encounter with police outside of Orlando West High School; however, text is necessarily limited and for a true picture of the violence that engulfed Soweto see the 1992 film *Soweto: A History*, directed by Angus Gibson.

[525] Pohlandt-McCormick cites this official number from the Cillié Report, unofficial estimates at this point were much higher (Cha. 3, 34). Karis and Gerhart cite the Cillié Report's official number of 575 dead at the end of February 1977, noting that the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) estimated 618 had been killed at that point (Karis and Gerhart, 168). In *A People on the Boil*, Harry Mashabela offers the unofficial estimate that 400 people had been killed in Soweto alone by the end of 1976 (Mashabela, 107). Without citing any sources in his journalistic account of the uprising this number should be seriously questioned; however, Mashabela is voicing a popular impression of the police reaction to the unrest and this number should be interpreted as an indicator of township residents' perception of the scope of the violence unleashed against them.

[526] Mashabela offers an example of Issac Seko, a former student at the University of the Witwatersrand who detonated a bomb outside a restaurant in downtown Johannesburg, injuring several people. Seko testified in court that he had "the highest patriotic motives" for detonating the bomb which was designed to "shake authorities into effecting meaningful reforms." Prior to June 16, Seko "had never supported any political organization. He had taken no interest in black or white politics" (Mashabela, 106).

[527] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 42.

townships, hundreds of young black students who had participated in the march and the riots that followed streamed across South Africa's borders seeking refuge from the often fatal interrogations of police.[528] The events of 1976 differed from those in Sharpeville sixteen years earlier, not only in scale, but also in the way that Soweto galvanized the population; this owed much to the fact that SASO and other Black Consciousness organizations had been actively working for eight years to create a solid foundation for mass action that was based upon self-worth, self-reliance, and solidarity among black South Africans.

"I've always thought that a writer in South Africa, whether he likes it or not, finds that he is involved in what is happening": *New Classic* and a new direction[529]

The Soweto Uprising deeply affected Sipho Sepamla who published his volume of poems, *The Soweto I Love,* as a reaction and response to this tragedy. By 1976, Sepamla had established himself as a poet, with two volumes in print, *Hurry up to it!*, and *The Blues in You is the Blues in Me*.[530] After the summer of 1976 however, the forty-four year old poet found his attitude toward politics and writing completely changed. In the introduction to Sepamla's *Selected Poems*, Mbulelo Mzamane described Sepamla, saying "there is little of the fire-eating politician in him- nonetheless his political message comes

[528] Pohlandt-McCormick, Cha. 2, 152-58. As evidence of this, Pohlandt-McCormick cites her interview with Zakes Molotsi, an older activist and member of an underground ANC cell. Molotsi himself made the trip between South Africa and Botswana seven times, successfully taking 800 people across the border. In the wake of Soweto, the exiled status of the ANC and its organizational structure placed it in the optimum position to capitalize on the hundreds of youths who were crossing South Africa's borders. Politicized and ready for action, these youths swelled the ANC's ranks.
[529] Sepamla. *Selected Poems*, 13.
[530] In his introduction to Semapla's *Selected Poems*, Mzamane characterized Sepamla's first two volumes of poetry as expressions of frustration with the apparent apathy in black communities following Sharpeville-Langa. It is not surprising then that in the wake of Soweto, Sepamla's feeling that "blacks have been silent for too long" would assume a special sense of urgency (Sepamla, *Selected Poems*, 14-5).

through clearly if slightly more indirectly."[531] Mzamane clarified that Sepamla's politics "veer more towards an insistence on the moderating voice of reason and an emphasis on individual rights and freedom than toward the collectivist ethic" that was held by some of the younger poets of the BC generation.[532] Just as Sepamla's stylistic emphasis on subtlety and moderation reflected Nakasa's literary approach, Sepamla's reaction to the radical writers who matured under the influence of BC was similar to the alienation felt by Nakasa when confronted with Black Power in Harlem. Of these radical BC writers Sepamla said, "I do of course feel a little distant from the young guys, because their pace, or perhaps their impatience is so hard that so far I'm not able to cope with them."[533] According to Mzamane, after Soweto, Sepamla began to appreciate the impatience of the youth and made the decision to become more outspoken and overtly political by embracing and expressing the anger of black communities.[534] In the wake of Soweto, Sepamla began to view his role as a writer differently, and said of the tragedy, "I'm an historian."[535]

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[531] Sepamla, *Selected Poems*, 13.
[532] Ibid.
[533] Ibid.
[534] Sepamla, "A Note on *New Classic* and *S'ketsh*'" *English in Africa* 7 no. 2 (Sept 1980): 83. In this article, Sepamla remembered the flood of writing that poured into *New Classic* from the "ghettoes" after Soweto, saying "by the time this happened something within the administration of both magazines had happened; in addition, the radicalism evident all around me had killed something of my idealism." Sepamla did not elaborate on his "idealism"; however it is reasonable to speculate that in the wake of Soweto, Sepamla felt that his prior attitudes about "moderation" and "reason" were untenable. Reading the many pieces that were submitted to *New Classic* after the riots may have also revealed to him that as a black magazine editor he had responsibilities that extended beyond the literary realm to which white editors were not subject.
[535] Sepamla, *Selected Poems*, 15. This new responsibility was manifested in the novel he published in 1981, *A Ride on the Whirlwind*, which was a fictional account of the 1976 student uprising and subsequent riots.

The BC attitudes of self-reliance and solidarity that had given the Soweto schoolchildren the language to express their anger at the Afrikaans directive were also responsible for the determination with which Sepamla approached *New Classic*. Yet these beliefs also created difficulties for him as an editor by inhibiting the creation of an efficient organizational structure as well as attracting the attention of government censors.[536] Money, however, proved to be a more pernicious problem for Sepamla than his philosophical beliefs, and the financial demands of *New Classic* adversely impacted his BC inspired goal of connecting with township readers. The remnants of Nakasa's Farfield grant were exhausted after the first issue of *New Classic*, but Sepamla was able to quickly secure financial assistance from The Chairman's Fund of Anglo-American Corporation. Sepamla opened the second issue of *New Classic* by graciously thanking Anglo for their support (which amounted to a grant of R2,000 for four issues) saying

[536] Sepamla's decision to shoulder much of the burden of *New Classic* on his own was a way in which he could live Black Consciousness. He stated in his 1980 article on *New Classic* and *S'ketsh'* that *The Classic* had "white ladies ready to offer charitable services, but *New Classic* was another age, the age of the black woman whose realities were of another order" (Sepamla, "A Note," 84). The reality was that black women often could not afford to spend time doing unpaid work, and Sepamla decided against accepting charitable white assistance. When comparing Nakasa's magazine to Sepamla's, it is striking to realize that Sepamla was attempting to create a more confrontational magazine without the large international network of financial supporters and literary colleagues available to Nakasa, all while under the watchful eyes of a state that had become accustomed to using force and intimidation to prevent organization and expression by blacks.

"Nangomso Madoda!"[537] Despite this grant, during its three years in print, the price of *New Classic* rose two hundred percent, from fifty cents to R1.50. In a 1977 letter to Audrey Cobden, a former editorial adviser to *The Classic* who handled distribution of *New Classic* in Natal, Sepamla stated that he had been forced to "drop idealism and price the magazine in relation to the cost of producing it."[538] In 1978, Sepamla expressed to Cobden a frustration with his inability to control rising costs: "I am more than concerned with the high price for *New Classic*. While I could claim to be making steady progress in the townships, I'm disappointed by the fact that *New Classic* is becoming elitist. This worries me a lot and I want to do something about it."[539] In his correspondence with Cobden, Sepamla had to make regular requests for Natal distributors to settle their overdue accounts. In 1978, *New Classic's* last year in print, Sepamla wrote to Cobden,

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[537] *New Classic* 2, (1975). Technically called the Anglo-American Corporation-De Beers' Chairman's Fund, at the time it was financed by annual deposits of an amount fixed at 0.5% of De Beers and Anglo's profits. After 1973, the Fund began directing its efforts toward "black economic development. See *South Africa Inc.*, 93-117 for a discussion of the philanthropic strategies of Anglo that were aimed at stabilizing the black population after Sharpeville. Sepamla, perhaps hoping to follow Nakasa's footsteps and develop an international audience, sent advanced copies of *New Classic* and the theatre magazine *S'ketsh'* to London (300 copies and 200 copies respectively). In response, he received a threatening letter instructing him to pick up his magazines or lose them to the River Thames. In his 1980 article, "A Note," Sepamla recalled that the infuriated British writer accused him of working with capitalist exploiters, responding: "as if I wasn't aware of it at the time!" Sepamla rationalized his actions by stating "that the exploiter can be exploited for the good of the common man, the very source of his strength" (Sepamla, "A Note", 82). Here Sepamla has echoed the theme of *The Classic* story "The Tomb," in which the labor of the oppressed was at once the source of the oppressor's power and his greatest weakness. Recognition of this fact was an important step toward the empowerment and self-confidence that the BCM sought to promote. In fact, while he was with BCP, Biko faced similar criticism when he accepted financial aid from the "capitalist exploiters" at Anglo-American to complete the Zanempilo Community Health Centre. A project as large as Zanempilo required significant capital investment, and Biko saw in Anglo's offer an opportunity to return the company's profits to their rightful owners, the people. Channeling Anglo funding through BCP allowed these activists to avoid the dependency that they saw occurring from charitable relationships and instead the money financed a process that would empower those who worked on Zanempilo, ultimately creating a community health center that was outside state control (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 168). See Karis and Gerhart, 122 for a more general discussion of this seeming contradiction of BC principles.

[538] Letter Sepamla to Cobden, 3 Mar., 1977. WCHP A2696 B5

[539] Letter Sepamla to Cobden, 14 Dec., 1978. WCHP A2696 B5.

"this is a bothersome letter because I'm at it again- moaning!"[540] Sepamla revealed to Cobden that Anglo-American was likely to end its sponsorship of the magazine, and his overtures to "white friends" had been unsuccessful because these friends had "shrunken into their shells" either "because the South African way of life looks askance at interracial associations or because they fear the rising storm of blackness."[541] Sepamla did not seem eager to witness this "rising storm," and told Cobden that he had been pondering his own exodus from South Africa. "I don't see things improving in the foreseeable future" wrote Sepamla, "everybody seems to think there are other priorities to things like *New Classic* and *S'ketsh'* and I've begun to wonder if this is not afterall true."[542] Sepamla attributed part of his frustration to difficulties he had been having with some of his "communal ventures."

Sepamla's fear of the "rising storm of blackness" was his reaction to the dramatic effect of the Soweto Uprising upon the black liberation struggle in South Africa. In his book, *Lessons of Struggle*, Anthony Marx suggests that the state's violent reassertion of control throughout 1977 clearly indicated that "active confrontation had begun."[543] Marx explains that this revelation was not lost on Biko and other BC leaders for whom the "greater concern with organized confrontation was overshadowing the movement's earlier goals of reshaping values and inspiring racial assertiveness, which were not by themselves sufficient to counter repression."[544] The abrupt transition to "Phase Two," the

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[540] Letter Sepamla to Cobden, 30 Mar., 1978. WCHP A2696 B5.
[541] Ibid.
[542] Ibid.
[543] Anthony Marx, *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 79.
[544] Marx, *Lessons of Struggle*, 79.

physical confrontation of the agents and apparatuses of apartheid marked by the Uprising, created a sense of urgency within the BCM that, according to Marx, stimulated debates over "how the movement's ideology and strategy should be adjusted to fit the new circumstances."[545] Coordination with white organizations that could provide badly needed material support was one fiercely debated issue. The potential for the BCM to evolve was arrested in 1977 however, when Steve Biko was brutally beaten to death while shackled in the detention cells of the Security Police on September 12, and the state banned seventeen prominent BC organizations on October 19.[546] As an editor who sought to portray the "black experience," Sepamla must have been shaken by the events of 1976 and 1977: the movement away from developing consciousness through cultural activities by many BC organizations, the murder of one of the most prominent advocates of conscientisation through arts and culture, and finally the banning of so many important BC organizations. In the wake of these tragedies it is understandable that the future Sepamla foresaw looked bleak. Although *New Classic* cannot be truly considered a BC publication in the vein of the *SASO Newsletter* and *Black Review* because of Sepamla's

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[545] Marx, *Lessons of Struggle,* 81. Halisi compliments Marx's treatment of the period following Biko's murder and "the transition to black consciousness socialism." However, Halisi cautions that "the tendency to organize the history of the BCM into neat, mutually exclusive black nationalist and socialist phases may only serve to mask the ongoing tension between nonracial and race-conscious conceptions of liberation. In addition, such interpretations may stem more from a multiracialist bias than an honest interpretation of the murky realities on the ground" (Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 131).

[546] Biko was caught reentering Kingwilliamstown, his banning area, from Cape Town, where he had gone to address divisions within the BPC over the issues of race and class, and to meet with exiled ANC leaders to discuss unity among liberation organizations. The issue of class analysis, which was intertwined with that of race, was raised in early 1976 by SASO president Diliza Mji. Marx describes Mji's contradiction of "BC's basic assumption of unity among all blacks as victims of oppression," explaining that "he contended instead that blacks had diverse interests and that the opposition should embrace those with common values of resistance," including the ANC as well as committed white liberals (Marx, 77). See Marx, 73-105 for further discussion of how these debates continued after the bannings of the BPC and other BC organizations.

inclusion of the works and opinions of white writers, *New Classic* was a forum for those writers who witnessed the brutality of state repression in response to the perceived revolutionary threat of the BCM, and the material presented within it can be read as an indicator of the growing power of the BC "cultural revolution" even among those who were outside the ideological framework of the BCM.[547]

The writers of *New Classic,* followed the "literary renaissance" initiated by Abdullah Ibrahim in *The Classic* and the "cultural revolution" carried out by BC theater groups like Mihloti, embracing the essence of BC by striving to create a more genuine connection with black readers. Constructing this relationship meant disregarding Western literary standards of quality, and gravitating toward socially relevant fiction that was more overtly political and confrontational than that of *Drum* or *The Classic*. This inward turn taken by black writers, and the melding of the political and literary was not accepted by all the writers of this magazine and the essays of *New Classic* serve as a record of this conflict.

[547] *Black Review* was a BCP publication printed by RAVAN Press that functioned as an encyclopedia of black organizations in South Africa. While Sepamla's acceptance of white writing that reflected the black experience seems to contradict a basic tenet of BC, his position as editor and creator of the magazine should be considered in the context of what Biko wrote in his essay "Black Souls in White Skins." "Once the various groups within a given community have asserted themselves to the point that mutual respect has to be shown then you have the ingredients for a true and meaningful integration" (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 21). It is possible that to Sepamla, his acceptance of white writing did not appear as a serious contradiction of BC. In the editor/contributor relationship, he operated from a position of authority, and quite possibly did not think it was necessary or beneficial to exclude whites who were willing to submit their work to be judged worthy by a black editor.

"Our agony now is to decide our relevance under the circumstances": Literary debates in *New Classic*[548]

Much like those of *The Classic*, the critical essays printed in *New Classic* generally focused on the role of the writer in society. However, the pursuit of national unity through art became less pronounced as writers in *New Classic,* and later in *Staffrider,* adopted a more confrontational view of artistic production as an avenue for empowering oppressed communities. In the second half of the 1970s, much like those involved in the black theater groups discussed above, black writers turned inward to focus on black readers, a process in which these authors began to reconsider the ways in which they had been producing their art. This shift among black writers was most likely a response to the incredible pressures to become politically active they were experiencing. Through years of legislation the apartheid state had made the most intimate details of black lives a political matter; writers like Can Themba and Nat Nakasa among others had been treated as dangerous individuals by the state, even though they considered themselves to be "apolitical" or "political novices."[549] The emergence of BC in the late 1960s had placed a new political responsibility on writers, as producers of

[548] *New Classic* 4 (1977). This line is from Sepamla's opening editorial for the first issue since the Soweto Uprising. He offered an apology for delaying this issue, reasoning that "we couldn't see our way clear to publish while our brothers and sisters were being detained left, right and centre." Sepamla stated that they had to "go through the mourning period" before resuming publication.

[549] Can Themba was an example of this, a self confessed "political virgin" who was "more interested in people than politics," the state still considered Themba a threat and his work was banned in 1966 (*The Classic* 2, no. 4, 13). Nat Nakasa also considered himself "apolitical" despite living the "fringe" life which the state saw as a subversive activity. This literary debate will evolve into a theme of several short stories in *Staffrider*. In these stories a character foolishly avoids political activity only to find himself/herself mired in a political confrontation that has been forced upon him/her by the state. The lesson to be taken from these stories is the inescapability of politics in South Africa. Njabulo S. Ndebele bluntly pointed this out in a letter to the editors of *Staffrider* in 1983, saying "nothing in South Africa is neutral" (*Staffrider* 5, no.3, 45).

culture, to take an active role in conscientising oppressed South Africans. Caught in a vice between the state and the demands of the liberation struggle, writers discussed and debated their predicament on the pages of *New Classic*.[550]

Sipho Sepamla's address to the United States Information Service Writers' Seminar in 1975, which was reprinted in the second issue of *New Classic*, provides an excellent example of one writer's struggle to deal with these new political pressures prior to embracing his role as an "historian" in the wake of the Soweto uprising.[551] At times Sepamla seemed to push back against BC and follow the logic that guided authors like Nadine Gordimer and Douglas Livingstone by wondering "how much growth in a broader artistic sense we [writers] miss as a result of our fixation on protest?"[552] While addressing other black writers, Sepamla claimed, "we don't need to be more angry."[553] Sepamla's suggestion of a specific purpose or goal for black writers distinguishes his essay from the statements of white writers like Gordimer and Livingstone and places Sepamla more in line with the impatient young black writers who fully embraced BC. "Every Black writer must be self-conscious," Sepamla contended, "we must not pander to the whims of White tastes."[554] Going deeper than simple stylistic differences, Sepamla wondered whether his use of English when writing had impaired his ability to connect

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[550] It is fitting that *New Classic* was a venue for these debates considering Mzamane's estimation that Sepamla's poetry opened up "one of the great debates of black South African liberation politics." At the heart of this debate was the question, should the strategy for liberation be one of protest, negotiation, and appeals to a common humanity or did the path to freedom run through confrontation, direct challenge, and angry denunciations of injustice? (Sepamla, *Selected Poems*, 14).
[551] Sipho Sepamla, "The Black Writer in South Africa Today: Problems and Dilemmas," *New Classic* 3, (1976): 18-25.
[552] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 19.
[553] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 25.
[554] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 21.

with his desired audience.[555] He lamented that, "in the past we might have taken the Black audience for granted, I think today we tend to believe that our duty is to reach that audience as much as possible."[556]

In his first critical essay printed in *New Classic*, Mbulelo Mzamane placed Sepamla's emphasis on the black audience in a more stridently BC tone, noting "the growing reluctance among blacks to address themselves to whites."[557] Mzamane distinguished the African writer by stating that "he intends his art to be functional, to enable him to cope with his urgent problems, which often range from personal problems of identity to continental problems of a political nature. This is not to say that what's being said is not as important as how it's being said – we have our share of poor literature with very little claim to being anything else but blatant pamphleteering."[558] Sepamla's qualification in his opening editorial that *New Classic* would not serve as a forum for

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[555] Despite his concerns, Sepamla made it clear that he would apologize to no one for his use of English. He defended his use of English by asserting the power and relevancy of English as the lingua franca of South Africa and the language of industry and international power. The debate over writing in English or vernacular languages is a long standing one among African authors. See *Zulu Identities*, "Poetic Masters of Zuluness" (449-63) by David Attwell for the very public debate between H.I.E. Dhlomo and B. Wallet Vilakazi that took place in the late 1930s over the use of Zulu or English in poetry. Five years after Sepamla's editorial, Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o would state in *Staffrider* that "African literature can only be written in African languages," all other African writing in English should be classified as "Afro-Saxon literature" (*Staffrider* 4, no. 2, 36). See Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Something Torn and New* for a more complete discussion of this Nigerian writer's interpretation of the impact of colonialism on African literature.

[556] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 21.

[557] Mbulelo Mzamane, "The 50s and Beyond: An Evaluation," *New Classic* 4, (1977): 23-32, 30.

[558] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 25. The erosion of literature in the face of, as Douglas Livingstone called it, "the tempting facilities of the political pamphleteer" (New Classic 3, 62) was a real fear even among writers like Sepamla and Mzamane who were open to creative writing that addressed political issues.

sloganeering indicates that he agreed with Mzamane's conclusion that social relevancy was not an adequately strict standard of quality for black South African literature.[559]

However, the growing influence of BC on black writers to become more politically expressive was gradual, and *New Classic* was a platform from which writers could contest politically driven literature. In the first issue of *New Classic,* Adam Small arrived at a conclusion familiar to Gordimer and Nakasa. Small felt that literature could play a positive role in a fractured society because "a great piece of writing remains the highest humanising influence in the world."[560] Writing from a Marxist perspective, Small attributed the underlying cause of social disaffection to class exploitation rather than white racism.[561] However, by quoting the fiercely anti-communist Russian author,

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[559] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 2. In the same issue as Mzamane's critical essay, Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah submitted an essay which was his first public discussion of his work. His purpose for breaking his silence was to lambaste a prominent Western critic of African literature, Professor Charles Larson. Armah's position was that the western critic interpreted African art for a western audience, and it was the duty of this interpreter to filter information according to the audience's pre-conceived notions. He elaborated, "the work of an interpreter requires not a slavish adherence to outlandish truths but the kind of judicious distortion that protects hallowed prejudices from the terrible violence of uncouth truths." For Armah, white racism prevented any fair judgment of African art by the western world. According to Armah, this racism was the power behind the gravitational pull of the western literary world which established itself as the standard to which African writing should conform. Armah attributed elements of paternalism to the western critic who "arrogates to himself the power to award his brightest pupils one way tickets – perhaps we should call them scholarships – into the mainstream of Western Literature" (for examples see Lewis Nkosi and Nat Nakasa who accepted Nieman fellowships. For Nakasa this was indeed a one-way ticket). Here Armah was in partial agreement with Livingstone's opinion that African poetry composed in English, if good enough, "would become English poetry, either by joining the mainstream or, even more exciting: altering the banks, the direction, the flow of that mainstream" (*New Classic 3*, 62). Although for Armah, the river of western literature was far too entrenched to change its course, and in his opinion, the African writer should free himself or herself from the compulsion to dive into this foreign waterway. Together, the essays of Armah and Mzamane in *New Classic* provided perhaps the best indication of the frustrations felt by black South African writers who considered the standards of English language literature to be irrelevant to their own work (Ayi Kwei Armah, "Larsony or Fiction as Criticism of Fiction," *New Classic* 4, (1977): 33-45).

[560] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 6.

[561] In this respect, Small is in line with *New Classic* and *Staffrider* writers who sought to draw attention to the underlying causes of their present situation, not simply the psychological complexes of black people, but also the capitalist enterprises that fueled the engine of apartheid. See Halisi, *Black Political Thought,* Chapter 2 "Racial Proletarianization: Moments in the Evolution of a Concept" for more on the racially-based dispossession of South Africans.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who cited art and literature as a means to coordinate different value scales, Small followed a model established by several of the essays in *The Classic:* that the themes and characters of fictional writing could transcend racial (or in Small's example, class) differences and expose a common humanity.[562] In the same issue that featured Small's article, Nadine Gordimer contributed a piece that again castigated any infringement of the writer's free expression.[563] Concerned with the growing BC "cultural revolution," the target of her article, "A Writer's Freedom," was not the censorship apparatus but the "more insidious" threat of "conformity to an orthodoxy of opposition."[564] The writer needed to present "the *truth as he sees it,*" Gordimer testified, for one's "integrity as a writer goes the moment he begins to write what he is told he ought to write."[565] She continued by quoting Jean-Paul Sartre's view of the artist's responsibility to his/her society: "he is someone who is faithful to a political and social body but never stops contesting it. Of course, a contradiction may arise between his fidelity and his *contestation*, but that's a fruitful contradiction."[566] Gordimer was again stating her position that neither state repression nor popular expectations should ensnare a writer whose "commitment and creative freedom become one."[567] In this essay, Gordimer clarified that literature must be produced in an environment that is free of pressure from *any* interest group. Gordimer's impassioned cry reflected her concern for

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[562] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) was a Soviet dissident and political prisoner who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1970.
[563] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 11-16. See McDonald, *The Literature Police*, 182-86 for his discussion of Gordimer's reaction in to the emergence of the "Soweto Poets" in the early 1970s. McDonald draws upon this *New Classic* essay as well as Gordimer's book *The Black Interpreters* to examine how her literary philosophy evolved during this period from the 1970s to the early 1980s.
[564] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 12.
[565] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 12-13. Emphasis in original.
[566] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 13. Emphasis in original.
[567] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 16.

black authors, some of whom were being overwhelmed by the politics of their daily lives. For his part, the white poet, Douglas Livingstone acknowledged the pressures felt by his young black counterparts in his review of the works of Oswald Mtshali, Mongane Serote, Sipho Sepamla and others in the third issue of *New Classic*. "These men, these poets, must be at the centre of many opposing forces," Livingstone opined, "and if any Art survives at all in them it is little short of a miracle."[568] In his essay, Livingstone acknowledged Gordimer's fears that political sectionalism could dominate literary choices: "the thugs of whatever persuasion 'persuading' them [writers] to devote their talents to regional nationalisms, to the struggle, to the revolution, to the *status quo*."[569] Livingstone clearly viewed "the struggle" as detrimental to "the craft." Reaching a similar conclusion, Gordimer reasoned that "the jargon of struggle…is not deep enough, wide enough, flexible enough, cutting enough, fresh enough for the vocabulary of the poet, the short story writer or the novelist."[570] In both these essays, Gordimer and Livingstone advocated the preservation of artistic integrity over political commitment. While neither wholly rejected politically relevant material, Gordimer probably agreed

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[568] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 50.
[569] Ibid. Emphasis in original.
[570] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 13. Gordimer is a true believer in the power of literature. Although the positions she takes in these articles can be interpreted as the luxuries of a white writer, they do not indicate a lack of political commitment on her part, but rather her desire to protect literature as an art form independent of manipulation. Gordimer's dedication to anti-apartheid action was recorded in the June 1980 *Staffrider* news section where a review of the Conference on Censorship at the University of Cape Town was published. A topic of this conference was how the writer should respond to official censorship. The strategy that was adopted by black and white authors (of which Gordimer was the only one listed) was one of noncooperation with government censors**.** Under the Publications and Entertainments Act of 1963, an appeals board was established for writers to petition for the unbanning of their works. The consensus at this conference was that writers should not appeal these bannings. The *Staffrider* news reporter wrote that to do so would be "to lose the strategic advantage gained by the dramatic confrontation which at present defines the cultural arena in South Africa" (*Staffrider* 3, no. 2, 47).

with Livingstone's conclusion that "the indirect blow, artfully delivered usually has the greater effect (artistically speaking) than a full frontal assault."[571]

Bessie Head took a more direct stance against political literature in the final issue of *New Classic*, stating "I have avoided political camps and ideologies because I feel that they falsify truth."[572] Head credited the "artificial barriers" between people that underpinned the apartheid structure with defeating her goal as an artist.[573] In Head's case, setting parameters on her audience according to race, economic freedom, or legislative rights was undermining her artistic integrity. It was only when she settled outside a racially divided society in Botswana, "where all the people are welded together by an ancient order" that she felt at home in the literary world.[574] For many writers in South Africa, the positions of Bessie Head, Nadine Gordimer, Douglas Livingstone, and Nat Nakasa were untenable in the charged atmosphere that followed the Soweto Uprising. The impact of the violence of June 1976 upon Mzamane can clearly be seen when comparing two of his essays printed in *New Classic*. The first was a speech, "The

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[571] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 51. Livingstone's emphasis on the indirect blow brings to mind Nakasa and only reinforces the differences between the *Drum* writers of the Sophiatown era and the BC authors of a post-Soweto Uprising South Africa. In the wake of Soweto it is valid to question whether this "artistic integrity" was a privilege of white writers. Livingstone's clarifying clause, "artistically speaking" provides an interesting avenue of questioning. Did these black writers have the luxury to speak as artists rather than as oppressed persons? Additionally, were their audiences interested in reading the works of artists, or the writings of fellow dispossessed blacks?

[572] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 31. This is remarkably similar to the position Lionel Abrahams took in 1966 that was published in a 1969 issue of *The Classic*. Abrahams asked "once issues become political, who remains interested in 'the truth of things'?" (*The Classic* 3, no. 2, 45). In Head's article she acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining a neutral position. "I think that our only education in South Africa, as black people, is a political one," Head wrote, "we learn bitterly, everyday, the details of oppression and exploitation so that a writer automatically feels pressured into taking a political stand of some kind or identifying with a camp" (*New Classic* 5, 31).

[573] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 30.

[574] Ibid. This is clearly a romantic and idealized interpretation of society in Botswana; however, the important thing is Head's perception of the bonds of community in Botswana and how this contrasts with the situation in South Africa.

50's and Beyond: An Evaluation," delivered two months before the uprising; and the second was an article, "Literature and Politics among Blacks in South Africa" submitted in 1978 from his position in the English Department at the University of Botswana and Swaziland.[575] The more aggressive tone of the second article reveals a change in Mzamane's attitude, but also indicates a broader shift toward direct confrontation of the apartheid system by black writers.[576] In 1976, Mzamane stated that the black African artist had "divorced himself from the concept of 'art for art's sake' and saw his art as being for 'life's' sake."[577] In 1978, Mzamane rephrased this point to read "the bourgeois concept of culture as entertainment has been swept aside in South Africa. The concept of art for art's sake is dead."[578] Mzamane adopted a position that firmly established the difference between himself and a writer like Nadine Gordimer by proposing to "treat creative writing as though it were socio-political documentation" and to "re-assert the Aristotelian belief in the instructional value of literature."[579] Following the example of

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[575] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 23-32. The address was delivered at a conference sponsored by *S'ketsh'* and *New Classic* on "Black Writing: Problems and Prospects of a Tradition" 17-19 April, 1976. *New Classic* 5, (1978): 42-57.

[576] Mzamane's novel *The Children of Soweto* reflects the profound impact these events had upon his life. It should be noted that the conference where Mzamane gave his speech, held just before Soweto exploded, was sponsored by two black-published magazines and the atmosphere was most likely one receptive to more radical statements. The fact that Mzamane's most forceful comments were not made until 1978 reinforces the point made above, that writers in the late 1970s began to respond to their social, economic, and political positions in ways calculated to match the intensity of state repression.

[577] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 25.

[578] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 56. This was a belief held by Sepamla and Njabulo Ndebele as well, Sepamla recalled in "A Note": "we were clear about art for art's sake. That was never our thing" (Sepamla, "A Note," 83). In 1978, Mzamane was not content to disassociate himself with "art for art's sake"; he had to kill this concept. Additionally, by categorizing this concept as the intellectual property of the bourgeoisie, Mzamane indicated the growing influence of class-analysis in BC circles that led to divisions within the movement after Biko's murder in detention in 1977.

[579] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 42. The directness of this post-Soweto writing is what distinguishes it from the so-called protest writing of the 1950s, much of which has been interpreted above as didactic urban parables. Many writers were no longer content to create scenes in which the reader could choose to insert him/herself. Through specific character types and narrator intervention these authors wrote directly to their readers, forcing them to acknowledge the writers' social or political message.

didactic black theater set by Mihloti and other groups, Mzamane considered literature to be an artistic medium through which the oppressed population of South Africa, as a precursor to reasserting their humanity, could critically examine the position they had been forced into by the apartheid state. Discussing the political pressures felt by black South African artists, Mzamane took a different approach than Livingstone did in 1976 by claiming that "revolutionary poets do not feel artistically stifled by this, as popular myth has it."[580] Rather, Mzamane claimed that "since the most important lessons for South Africans are in the political sphere, a writer in that land is unimportant, irrelevant and probably alienated unless he is political. Art and politics in South Africa, as in many parts of Africa, have become inseparable for the simple reason that politics pervades all aspects of a Blackman's existence."[581] For Mzamane, this was something that the "the misleading Western enemy critic" simply could not understand.[582] Mzamane's attitude in this essay reflected the growing desires of black writers to free themselves from Western standards and create "a more authentic art form, unapologetically projecting a Black image, reflecting conditions from a Black perspective, expressing the people's needs and their aspirations, and supporting the liberation struggle."[583] Continuing his onslaught, Mzamane stated that "the poets, in service of the revolution, have the function of articulating the people's aspirations, sustaining their spirits and generally working in line

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[580] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 55. It is entirely possible that these revolutionary poets did not feel artistically stifled because they held their work to a different standard than other poets. Their position as black South Africans dictated the form taken by their art, and to these poets, its status as art may have been secondary to its status as revolutionary inspiration, which of course, could also be labeled propaganda.
[581] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 42.
[582] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 55.
[583] *New Classic* 5, (1979): 57.

with the liberation movements."[584] Mzamane's use of the words "service" and "function" to describe a poet's work just two years after cautioning against "blatant pamphleteering" illustrate the dramatic impact wrought by the Soweto Uprising on his perception of the writer's role in South Africa. This final critical essay of *New Classic* is brimming with the radical possibilities of BC, the body of ideas that would animate *Staffrider*, a literary magazine that would emerge in *New Classic's* final year to become a platform for the continuation of this "unapologetic" writing.

"We look forward to new blood if the other kind has dried up": *New Classic* and a new generation of short stories[585]

The radical statements of Mzamane in his 1978 essay are understandable in the context of the BC inspired drive for independence from white guidance in the liberation struggle, and freedom from white standards in the literary realm. Although writers of *The Classic* had called for more strict standards of criticism, Mzamane moved beyond Mphahlele's, Nkosi's, and Nakasa's suggestions to propose that these critical standards should respect the growing introspection of black writers. Mzamane stated, in his article "The 50s and Beyond: An Evaluation," that "a category for African committed literature

[584] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 55. In *The Literature Police*, McDonald pinpoints Gordimer's unease with many of these "revolutionary poets" who she believes, through their use of liberation slogans, do not fully embrace the power of poetic expression. These poets should be considered in the broader context of the BC reevaluation of white standards. It is plausible to propose that these poets only considered their work "good" when it adequately met the demands, literary or otherwise, of the various black communities they sought to represent.

[585] *New Classic* 3, (1976). In Sepamla's opening editorial he was forced to plead for more short storys.

must be made to which we may not apply purely western standards."[586] Pondering what the future held for black South African authors unhitched from the tug of foreign standards of form and content, Mzamane suggested perhaps a blending of poetry and prose that would appeal to black audiences. One literary element which Mzamane found promising was the use of "a distinctive African Idiom in English" that he had seen in the works of Mothobi Mutloatse and Moteane Melamu.[587] Born in Sophiatown, Melamu was a senior lecturer in the English Department at the University of Botswana and Swaziland when his story "Bad Times, Sad Times" was published in the third issue of *New Classic*.[588] Melamu relates the tale of a disgruntled husband, Joe, who is constantly berated and beaten by his enormous wife, Georgina. Joe narrates the story and describes how he fell in love with Georgina despite the warnings from his friends: "the guys put me into the picture about this, but me I tell them it's just too bad, *want ek mnca die cherry very bad*. As they say, love is mole-blind, so I ignore my friends."[589] The central conflict of this story emerges with Georgina's discovery of Joe's love letter to his girlfriend, Babsy. After Joe endures a physical and verbal lashing, he ends his tale by promising the reader, "I'm going to vanish just like that, and she won't know who to toss around. I know you don't believe me, *maar ek vertel you, my bla*, this time it's real.

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[586] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 23-32, 25. This statement clearly echoes Biko's article "We Blacks" in which he states "'black consciousness' seeks to show the black people the value of their own standards and outlook. It urges black people to judge themselves according to these standards and not to be fooled by white society who have white-washed themselves and made white standards the yardstick by which even black people judge each other" (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 30).
[587] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 32.
[588] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 1-12.
[589] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 2. Emphasis in original: "I want the lovely lady very badly," translation my own. In this sentence, *mnca* is derived from the isiZulu word *mncayi*, meaning fine, lovely, or great. *Cherry* is tsotsitaal, or township slang for an attractive woman/girl. The articles *ek* and *die* are Afrikaans, meaning *I* and *the* respectively.

You'll see…"[590] The significant elements of this story are the characters' conversations, conducted in the vernacular of South African urban areas, a blend of English, Afrikaans, and African languages often called Tsotsi'taal. Through the interaction of these characters, Melamu is envisioning a multiracial polyglot community as a response to the social fractures created by apartheid.[591]

In the next issue of *New Classic*, Mzamane's own story exhibiting this South African idiom was published. In addition to the vernacular dialogue, Mzamane's "A Present for My Wife" would have appealed to township readers because it featured several of the characters who would have been quite familiar to them, the shebeen queen and the tsotsi/trickster. The narrator again is a husband relating his marital problems to the reader. He lives next door to Mazibuko, a tsotsi/trickster character who, through the power of his wits, manages to acquire a variety of luxury items. This disparity in material wealth between neighbors inspires the narrator's wife to open a shebeen in their house to earn extra money. As her birthday draws near, the narrator's wife makes it known that she expects to receive an expensive leather jacket. In search of domestic peace, the narrator lies to his wife, telling her that he has placed a deposit on the jacket and that it will soon be hers. Problems arise when Mazibuko comes home with a present for his wife, which turns out to be the very jacket coveted by the narrator's wife. The

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[590] *New Classic* 3, (1976): 12. Emphasis in original: "but I tell you my brother," translation my own.
[591] Casey Motsisi's story "A Very Important Appointment" was printed in the first issue of *The Classic* and can be interpreted as a predecessor to Mutloatse and Melamu's work. Motsisi's story, although completely written in English, was told almost entirely through dialogue and prompted a letter from former *Drum* editor, Tom Hopkinson, who said that though it was not Motsisi's best work, he found the experimental style provocative and encouraged Nakasa to print similar works in the future. Alan Paton, however, wrote a letter to the editor stating that if Motsisi's story had been written by a white man, the reaction would have been different. While Paton may have been referring to disparate standards of quality for whites and blacks, it is interesting that this experimental style did not appeal to his liberal white literary sensibilities.

narrator is bewildered by this stroke of terrible luck until Mazibuko explains that this apparent coincidence is actually a scheme concocted by their wives. "*Hawu! Jy's nie curious nie*?" "*Ek sal you een ding vertel. Ngizokutshayela ngoba ngivabona ukuthi awukeni. Jy ken nix. Jy word 'n moomish, Babhedgile*, your wife and mine, to see who gets a leather jacket first."[592] The two men, demonstrating the ingenuity needed to survive in South Africa's townships, work out a plan in which they can use the one jacket to make two wives think they have both received presents. The story follows the basic structure of the adventure tales that had appeared in *Drum* and *The Classic* which had illustrated the tsotsi/trickster's ability to negotiate the difficulties of urban life under apartheid. What sets Mzamane's tale apart from these previous stories is his use of South African vernacular as a way to target a specific, black urban audience.

Unfortunately, *New Classic's* short existence prevented it from exploring developments in storytelling that incorporated South African idiom as a strategy for attracting a black readership. The fifteen short stories printed in *New Classic* illustrate how the literary field had changed since *Drum* and even since *The Classic*. By 1975, the realism of *Drum* protest writing had evolved into a more focused depiction of South African society. Moving away from generalized critiques of the urban environment, these writers of the mid-to-late 1970s issued pointed indictments of the state policies that regulated urban living. Many of these *New Classic* writers seemed to embrace Mzamane's re-assertion of the Aristotelian view of literature, encouraging readers to question their place in South African society by confronting them with stories that

[592] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 7. Emphasis in original.

forcefully exposed the dehumanizing effects of apartheid.[593] An appropriate analogy for how criticism in these stories progressed from those of *Drum* is in the description of an illness. In the 1950s, writers focused their criticisms on the symptoms: violence, hunger, theft, alcohol abuse, moral degradation. Later, in the 1970s, writers began to focus more directly on the disease itself: racial oppression, economic exploitation, apartheid. These *New Classic* writers did not go as far as the theater group Mihloti, whose spokesman in 1974 declared that the theater group would no longer produce plays that exposed the negative aspects of black lives.[594] Instead, *New Classic* stories held true to a degree of the realism so prevalent in *Drum* by acknowledging the deplorable conditions that had dominated township life; yet *New Classic* authors limited these conditions to the background against which characters acted in plotlines that allowed for a more nuanced criticism of apartheid policies.

Peter Wilhelm's story "The System" is an example of a nuanced criticism that completely avoids describing the social ills that captivated the 1950s writers in favor of a critique of the economic structure which created those conditions.[595] In fact, Wilhelm's

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[593] The stories that forced readers to question South African society and their place within it were similar to many of the didactic productions of black theater groups and Freire's system of problem-posing education.
[594] "Mihloti will not and does not present plays that tell you how unfaithful our women are. We do not present plays of our broken families, of how Black people fight and murder each other, or, bewitch each other, pimp, mistrust, hate, and despise each other; this kind of theater leaves the people broken and despaired. We tell the people to stop moaning and to wake up and start doing something about their valuable and beautiful Black lives." From the draft copy of *Black Review 1974* (April). WCHP A835 Da 8ii. This is without a doubt the sort of pressure that Gordimer feared in her article "A Writer's Freedom." The problem with Mihloti's approach is that these aspects of human life, while terrible, are incredibly powerful and important elements of the "black experience" in South Africa. Inadvertently, Mihloti was denying black people a level of agency by ignoring their capacity as humans to lie, betray, hate, and act terribly toward one another. On a certain level Mihloti was carrying out the apartheid agenda by dehumanizing black people. Obviously channeling the message of BC, the danger of Mihloti's declaration is that it did not emphasize that this should be a temporary strategy that would one day give way to theater that is free to examine the black (or possibly just South African) experience completely.
[595] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 21-26.

story makes no mention of race at all; instead, it focuses on the dehumanization of the mining industry which was primarily responsible for creating the migrant labor system around which many apartheid policies were constructed.[596] In "The System," an artist has been called to the city (it is implied that it is Johannesburg) by the mining magnate Giles Anselm to design a mural for the new Anselm Tower which, at 100 stories, will be the tallest building in the country. While in the city, the artist engages in a passionate love affair with Anselm's wife Mary. The artist becomes tormented by the thought of completing his work and leaving both his sketches and Mary with Anselm, who, throughout the story is described in inhuman terms as a "troll" with "claws." In their final meeting, the artist gives the designs to Anselm who then dispassionately verifies that the artist's affair with Mary has ended saying, "'then you are doubly the loser, since I have her – and this too.'" Feeling Anselm "acquire" the sketch, the artist was moved by "a weak anger," gasping, "what are you?" To which Anselm replied, "I am the owner of everything."[597] Anselm's cold desire to possess things overpowers any interest he may have taken in his wife's sexual adventures, reinforcing the impression that his greed has destroyed his humanity. Wilhelm's story goes beyond criticizing the avarice of this one man, however. Speaking through the artist, Wilhelm's description of the mine dumps around the city as "raped bodies" covering the "bones of men" buried deep beneath them

[596] Printed in the second issue of *New Classic*, it is a bit ironic that "The System" appeared in the same issue where Sepamla thanked Anglo-American for the grant which became the pillar of the New Classic Publications Trust Fund.

[597] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 26. Through Anselm, Wilhelm may have unintentionally tapped into Freire's concept of the "oppressor consciousness." Freire explains that this consciousness "tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination. The earth, property, production, the creations of people, people themselves, time- everything is reduced to the status of objects at its disposal." "Apart from direct, concrete, material possession of the world and of people" Freire states, "the oppressor consciousness could not understand itself- could not even exist" (Freire, 58).

suggests the human cost extracted by the mining industry upon which Johannesburg, and modern South Africa as a whole had been built.[598] Wilhelm's story is a broad criticism of industrialization and the system of migrant labor that accompanied it, traumatically altering the social structure of South Africa in the process.

Sepamla wrote two stories for the first issue of *New Classic* that are more focused than Wilhelm's criticism, and indict the specific apartheid policies that resulted from the migrant labor system. Sepamla's stories denounce the pass laws that were the cornerstone of influx control which regulated the supply of cheap black labor. BC undertones are apparent in Sepamla's first story, "King Taylor," which is told through the recollections of an old man, Mandlenkosi Thela, who lives in Stirtonville with his third wife, a shebeen queen.[599] Originally from Majuba Hill, like so many other Africans, Thela was forced to leave his family in the country while he travelled to the city to find work. After being forcibly removed from his home by authorities bent on destroying the legendary black freehold Sophiatown, Thela bought a Coloured identity card from his friend Joe. Initially Thela was hesitant, telling Joe "I am a Zulu. It is in my veins, flows to all the tips of my body, this Zulu blood. It is the blood of my ancestors. The blood of my unborn children. How can I give it up, just like that?"[600] With little difficulty, Joe is able to convince Thela that this document, on which his name was listed as King Taylor, granted access to a world of privilege that had been denied him as a black South African. As the story unfolds, Taylor is able to avoid further forced removals, and he briefly holds

[598] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 24.
[599] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 8-18.
[600] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 11.

a better job with his forged identity card. In the end, however, Taylor expresses a longing to return to Majuba Hill and to his first wife and children there. Chief among the many regrets Taylor has about his Coloured identity is that he cannot legally prove that he is the father of the child he had with his second wife. A literal interpretation of Sepamla's story reveals the feelings of alienation experienced by many black South Africans to be a direct result of the pass law system and apartheid policies that created a racial hierarchy. Additionally, Taylor's abandonment of two families is an example of the social instability that accompanied a migrant labor system. Underlying the whole story however, is a BC message. Not only has Thela's legal transformation into Taylor permanently separated him from his family and his cultural heritage; he has abandoned his fellow blacks. By participating in the apartheid version of "divide and rule," Thela has become complicit in the oppression of other blacks and thus his psychological anguish is ultimately his own fault.[601]

Sepamla's second story, "Kenalemang," is a more direct criticism of the absurdity of the paralyzing pass laws which forced Thela to become Taylor.[602] Sepamla's story begins while his narrator is at the pass office, where "one's hopes can be raised to a swooning fulfilment [sic]. Or simply dashed to utter despair."[603] Here the narrator encounters an acquaintance, Kenalemang, whose hopes were in the process of being

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[601] Thela seems to have been operating under the assumption that he was undermining the system of pass laws by acquiring this forged identity document. A BC critique would be that Thela was reinforcing the system by searching for the right type of pass, rather than rejecting the pass system as a whole. Biko addressed this issue in his article, "Fragmentation of Black Resistance," denouncing black participation in the Homeland policy and cautioning that "all of us who want to fight within the system are completely underestimating the influence the system has on us" (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 37).
[602] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 45-51.
[603] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 45.

dashed. "The sharks want my blood, that's all" Kenalemang exclaims, "they're talking about a time when I was a baby strapped on my mother's back!"[604] When Kenalemang was very young, his father died leaving no birth certificate for his son. The official solution to determine Kenalemang's place of birth, and consequently his place of residence, is to quiz him on numerous specific, yet mundane facts about his alleged birthplace. After this outburst, an agitated Kenalemang wanders off in the crowded office to try to sort out his pass problems. Four years later, the narrator sees Kenalemang again, this time in a court of law where he is on trial for murder. When asked for his plea, Kenalemang cries out for death, saying "I am 28 years boss. Ever since I was 18 years my papers were said to be 'out of order'. Nobody wanted to fix them up for me."[605] Labeled a "won't work," Kenalemang has been caught in a cycle of pass violation arrests, forced farm labor, and escape. Unable to find steady employment without his papers, he resorted to stealing and killed a white man during a robbery. The judge, unfazed by Kenalemang's emotional saga, sentences him to hang by his neck.[606] The narrator left the courtroom on the verge of tears, "I felt the guilt of Kenalemang. I thought it was the guilt of us all!"[607] Here Sepamla has illustrated the sordid relationship between the white judiciary and the farm labor system. Black Africans arrested for pass violations were often sentenced to hard labor on Afrikaner farms. Sepamla's closing line evokes German

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[604] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 46.
[605] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 49-50.
[606] While the judge's cold indifference to Kenalemang's situation is grounds for moral condemnation, it was not enough for Sepamla. Kenalemang had been in court for murder once before. After he had killed a black man in a botched burglary, the judge saw fit to give him a second chance; however, without fixing Kenalemang's papers it was a second chance in name only. This time Kenalemang had killed a white man, which placed him beyond the mercy of any South African court.
[607] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 51.

theologian Karl Jaspers' concept of metaphysical guilt as quoted by Biko in his essay "Black Souls in White Skins?": "There exists among men, because they are men, a solidarity through which each shares responsibility for every injustice and every wrong committed in the world, and especially for crimes that are committed in his presence or of which he cannot be ignorant."[608] It almost certainly occurred to Sepamla that no critically thinking individual in South Africa could honestly claim to be ignorant of the country's farm labor system. Years earlier, Mr. Drum, Henry Nxumalo, had made a name for himself by exposing on the pages of *Drum* the abuses perpetrated at the Bethel Farms. The collective guilt expressed by Sepamla's narrator, like Wilhelm's story, places responsibility on a wider population of South Africans who benefited from apartheid policies.

Sepamla's evocation of collective guilt for Kenalemang's death also suggests a collective responsibility for the system that dictated his behavior. This was a sentiment expressed by Biko and others influenced by BC. Biko understood that whites were also caught in the trap of apartheid; "born into privilege" they were "nourished" and "nurtured in the system of ruthless exploitation of black energy."[609] "If they are true liberals," Biko explained, "they must realise that they themselves are oppressed, and that they must fight for their own freedom."[610] While Sepamla's magazine was dedicated to literature that expressed the "black experience" in South Africa, three *New Classic* stories examined this theme of white guilt which had a precedent in *The Classic* stories that revolved

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[608] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 23. Biko also quoted Jaspers in his article "Fear- an Important Determinant in South African Politics" written in 1971.
[609] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 66.
[610] Ibid.

around white frustration. These three stories were penned by white women and one must wonder why Sepamla selected these stories for his magazine. It is possible that these stories were chosen in the hopes that their portrayals of white guilt would encourage white readers to closely examine their own role in South Africa's oppressive society and follow Biko's call to "fight for their own freedom." However, given Sepamla's dedication to a township audience and his own affinity for the African Humanism espoused by Mphahlele, it just as likely that Sepamla hoped that these stories would demonstrate to his readers that apartheid was a system that dehumanized all who lived within it, black and white, and that the struggle against apartheid was indeed, in the words of Biko, "the quest for a true humanity."[611] In these three stories, "Regina's Baby," "The Butcher Shop," and "The Visit," the white characters undergo an existential crisis that results from their positions of privilege in apartheid society.

In "Regina's Baby," the narrator is an Afrikaner woman who must tell her domestic servant, Regina that her baby has just died.[612] In this story, the author, Jean Marquard, an English professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, intersperses the unnamed narrator's distracted thoughts with the action of the story. It becomes apparent that, despite her wealth and life of privilege, this woman is deeply unhappy. She recalls a party she attended with her husband, Johan, the night before and the inevitable discussion of politics. The guests' conclusion seemed to be that "the Blacks are seen to be (in the near future) inviolate and isolate [sic] in their (ultimate and inevitable) realisation of

[611] This was the title of an article written by Biko for the book *Black Theology: The South African Voice*, edited by Basil Moore and published in 1973. The text of this article can also be found in *I Write What I Like*, 87-98. In this article, Biko draws heavily from both Fanon's and Freire's ideas about culture under colonialism and the negative impact of colonial domination on the colonialist.
[612] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 49-58.

Black Power."[613] While all the guests have much to say on the topic, the narrator notes that there was no acknowledgement of any complicity or responsibility among them for the current state of affairs. "For after all if you were, as you believed, decent, and humane, capable above all of standing up for your beliefs," she questioned, "then how on earth were you to define yourself in the framework of your country's values?" It becomes clear that the narrator's relationship with her husband only complicates the existential crisis brought about by the gap between her own values and the values of the government which guaranteed her privileged way of life. Speaking at once about her identity as an Afrikaner and her frustrations as a wife she says, "my life is like knitting. Even, monotonous, sometimes one notices a small mistake. A perfectionist would start unraveling but the eye can be trained not to see. In all things the habit of evasion is easily acquired. My life is like that."[614] After Marquard has established the deep-seated psychological pain of her narrator, Marquard puts her together with Regina in a most intimate situation so the reader cannot escape the differences between them. When Regina hears of the loss of her child, she explodes into agonizing cries of grief, rending her clothes and tearing at her hair. The narrator, having "never been close to such uncontrolled behavior," is shocked by this emotional display.[615] The Afrikaner woman drives Regina to her home in the township and is surprised by "the noisy community of pain" that has amassed outside Regina's home; so many people expressing a "genuine concern for Regina, true fellowship."[616] After leaving Regina, the narrator returns home

[613] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 50.
[614] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 51.
[615] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 52.
[616] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 57.

and is beset by "the familiar ache of loneliness, incompletion." In comparison to the intimacy of Regina's life, the sterility of the narrator's life overwhelms her as she looks at the separate twin beds in which her and her husband sleep and compares them to coffins. The narrator ends the story with a final comparison to Regina, "I put my head in the pillow and cry- quietly and privately and desperately. My grief is a silent, dignified, poised emotion. It allows me to resume my life again later, just as before."[617] This emotional story almost makes the reader feel sorry for the narrator, trapped by the values of her country and an unsatisfying marriage. However, this static character's desire to return to her life, "just as before" rather than standing up to the government (or husband) whose moral values do not match her own would certainly find no sympathy from a black audience who had suffered at the hands of the nationalist government for almost thirty years because whites had trained themselves "not to see" the violence of the system and preferred "evasion" to meaningful action.

In contrast to Marquard's narrator, the Afrikaner in "The Butcher Shop," reacts more constructively to a crisis of faith he is experiencing as a result of the work he had been doing for a state security agency. This story, written by Sheila Roberts, unfolds as a conversation between two old friends, Chris and Betty, who are catching up on the lost years over a cup of tea. During their conversation, Chris pours out his frustrations saying, "since after the riots we've had such a lot of work…..and they think we're just machines…..not human hey."[618] Many of his colleagues have been fired because of their

[617] *New Classic* 4, (1977): 58.
[618] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 26. Published in 1978, this is almost certainly a reference to the Soweto Uprising.

inability to catch enough "communists," Chris explains, "the *Office* cares about one thing only, *one* thing, and that's total, but total efficiency."[619] Chris' experiences at the *Office* have shaken his belief in Afrikaner nationalism. "I don't even want to read Afrikaans stories anymore" he tells Betty, who he does not believe understands what is happening to the leadership of their party. "There's the wip-neus upper class Afrikaner who only cares for money and all the goeters it can buy…the country means nothing to them" he rants, "I myself don't believe in *nothing* any more. Nothing. And I tell you they don't believe in nothing!"[620] These feelings had been building inside him for some time, but Chris tells Betty the breaking point had come when his friend had been fired and Chris had taken him to a bar to get drunk. Passing out in his car that night, the next morning Chris awoke in a world with "no colour. Just grey buildings and grey roads, and grey sky and grey everything."[621] When Chris arrived home, he was unable to convince his wife that he had not been with another woman and she threw him out. Since then, two days prior, Chris had not gone to work and had surely been fired. Jobless, homeless, and wifeless, the source of Chris' problems was his realization that the Afrikaner identity to which he had dedicated his life was merely a façade for the accumulation of wealth by a select few. Suddenly the black and white world which had been clear to him became a muddled palate of grey.

Roberts' security police officer who lost his faith and Marquard's housewife who realizes that all her wealth and privilege cannot bring her intimacy are characters that

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[619] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 22. Emphasis in original.
[620] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 23.
[621] *New Classic* 5, (1978): 25.

would have served the so-called protest writers of the 1950s well in their appeals to white morality. The next story to address white guilt, "The Visit," is more in the vein of the confrontational works of *Staffrider* than the stories in *Drum*. "The Visit," although penned by a white woman, follows the example of didacticism set by the black theater group who presented their audiences with problems and then posed revolutionary solutions.[622] In "The Visit," printed in the second issue of *New Classic*, Lindy Wilson directly addresses white guilt as a motivating factor through her character Séan, a young white man who is in prison for detonating a bomb at a railway station and accidentally killing a man in the process. As he sits in his cell, Séan asks himself "what had he been fighting against? Oppression? Or his own guilt? Guilt was the overriding power. He'd been born with it. It had broken over him at birth with the flowing water."[623] Here Wilson may be expressing a romanticized view of white guilt, no doubt portraying the power of this emotion in a way that many black South Africans wished to be true. Séan reflects on the guilt that he had experienced since his childhood, "it had grown and been nurtured and became one great, screaming destroyer."[624] In order to satiate this destroyer, Séan had unleashed it against a symbol of the exploitation of black labor: the railway station. While he sits in jail, Séan feels some regret for killing a railway employee who had arrived at work early that day, he is equally uneasy thinking that his bomb could have killed "thousands of those he sought to help if the train hadn't been stopped."[625] Nevertheless, Séan "had been confident of the bomb. It had given him a

[622] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 33-41.
[623] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 34.
[624] Ibid.
[625] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 39.

feeling of exultation to set it, alone, all the others in jail. He had felt a great surge of triumph. He had acted."[626]

While Wilson's story begins with the notion of white guilt, it rapidly becomes a story of generational tensions that stem not from the economic relationship between rural-father and urban-son that drove this conflict in *Drum*, nor from the adolescent need for freedom that was behind Gwala's "Side-Step" in *The Classic*. The generational tension in "The Visit" arises over a difference in political views, a theme that would become the overriding source of familial conflict in *Staffrider* stories. Séan's father, a farmer from outside Cape Town, comes to John Vorster Square to visit his son.[627] During his journey, the father contemplates why his son turned to such violent action, concluding that the bomb "must have something to do with apartheid" he thinks back to the letters Séan had written in which he expressed "very strong feelings" about South Africa.[628] The father had thrown these letters away without responding because he could not understand his son's emotional connection to "the underdog." It seems that Séan's father, like the narrator in "Regina's Baby," had lived a life of evasion which left him bewildered by his son's emotional response to the plight of black South Africans. The apparent distance between father and son is confirmed when they meet at the prison. Their conversation remains within the confines of superficial small talk until the father unknowingly crushes his son by saying "the commanding officer, who seems a very good

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[626] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 39.
[627] In an interesting twist that reduces the difference between white and black experiences in South Africa, Séan's father feels uncomfortable and out of place in Johannesburg, much like *Jim* from the *Drum* stories. Séan's father will not be corrupted in Johannesburg however, and his son will come to believe that his father has come to the city to do the corrupting.
[628] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 37.

fellow, says you could get off. You only have to tell the right things in Court."[629] The father continues to suggest that if the son would simply stand for the state and tell the court the names of the people who influenced him then he would be free again. For a moment Séan is shocked, "but he might have known that the Interrogator would do anything to try to destroy him."[630] Séan physically breaks down, crying to his father and shouting at him for not resisting the manipulation of the prison officials. His father is immediately contrite; however, the damage has been done. Feeling hollow and defeated in his cell that night, Séan has a nightmare in which his father appears in order to escort his son to the condemned cell. Séan breaks from his nightmare, awakened by his own screams. Overcome by relief when the night warder opens Séan's cell to tell him to be quiet, he asks the warder to summon the commanding officer so that they may have the conversation suggested by Séan's father. The warder laughs at Séan's request, as it is quite late and the commanding officer had long since left the prison. After a moment of reflection, Séan is grateful that his request has been refused and he shudders while wondering what he would have told the commanding officer. Disturbed by his momentary lapse in resolve, Séan then sees the solution to his weakness folded up in a pile of clean laundry: the cord of his dressing gown. As Séan prepares to hang himself, he catches a glimpse of the moon drifting behind some clouds and "he smiled faintly for Africa." Séan is calm as he prepares for his final act, feeling "strangely at peace with the world…his struggle with it had ceased."[631]

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[629] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 38.
[630] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 39.
[631] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 41.

As a character, Séan is ahead of his time. Politically conscious youths, dedicated to the liberation struggle are the pillars of many *Staffrider* stories. Séan would rather die than suffer the humiliation of self-betrayal, and his heroic acceptance of martyrdom at the end of the story foreshadows the actions of many black youths in the stories of *Staffrider*. Only Séan's skin color sets him apart from these later protagonists. In addition to his age, Séan's commitment to decisive action reveals him to be a product of the tense social atmosphere in South Africa that stimulated the formation of WCP and BCP as groups dedicated to concrete and meaningful change. An action-oriented youth until the very end of his life, Séan's discovery of the solution to his weakness and pain is relaxing, and although "a split second of indecision held him" just before he took his own life, "he moved against it."[632] Published in 1975, "The Visit" reflected the general climate of student/youth activism that SASO encouraged from the late 1960s into the 1970s. "The Visit" preceded the Soweto Uprising, but heroic action-oriented youthful protagonists, much like Séan, would become the preferred character type through which *Staffrider* writers could pay homage to the legacy of the Soweto schoolchildren.

While the youth activism glorified in "The Visit" would be taken to new heights in many *Staffrider* stories, the shift of leadership in the liberation struggle to a younger generation that seemed to occur with the Soweto Uprising was not readily accepted by all black South Africans. Similar to the *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* stories of *Drum*, some of the stories in *New Classic* and *Staffrider* gave voice to fears that these rebellious youths were dangerously unattached to any structures of power, save those they created for

[632] *New Classic* 2, (1975): 41.

themselves. Mbulelo Mzamane's story, "The Silva Cup is Broken" provides an example of a young man in whom the assertiveness encouraged by SASO has been perverted to satisfy his own selfish desires.[633] Just as the freedom of Mafika Gwala's character Tiny led to her moral degeneration in *The Classic*, Mzamane's character Mbuyiselo abuses his freedom, wreaking destruction on his own family and those of the three girls he impregnates. In the beginning of the story, it appears as if Mbuyiselo is a BC oriented youth whose grandmother does not understand his beliefs. She thinks it is absurd that her grandson "goes on jabbering about how he is not prepared to work for any white man."[634] It soon becomes clear that Mbuyiselo's refusal to subordinate himself to a white baas has little to do with his own psychological liberation, and is simply an excuse to be lazy. Mbuyiselo is disrespectful to his grandmother, sleeping and eating at her house without ever contributing to her welfare. When Mbuyiselo finally gets a job, he refuses to share his earnings with his grandmother despite her continued hospitality and generosity. When Jersey, the second girl who is carrying his baby and whom he had promised to marry, tells their priest that Mbuyiselo has been ignoring her and staying with another girl who is rumored to be pregnant with his child, he attacks her with a knife in his grandmother's home. Mbuyiselo's grandmother manages to protect Jersey and drive her wild grandson out of the house, but not before Mbuyiselo threatens his grandmother's life as well.

This fear of unattached youths running wild in an urban environment, illustrated by Mbuyiselo, had permeated the literary field since the industrialization and

[633] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 23-29.
[634] *New Classic* 1, (1975): 24.

urbanization of South Africa. Mzamane's story, written prior to the demonstration of youth power in Soweto, indicates a recognition that the revolutionary potential of youth organizations like SASO could be undermined by youngsters who were not just rebelling against the structures of apartheid control, but against any and all forms of social control.[635]

"Happily, a new star sits on our firmament": *New Classic* gives way to *Staffrider*[636]

In this study, *New Classic* occupies a critical period during which BC spread beyond universities, the students of Soweto initiated a new phase of the liberation struggle, and the state responded with an effort to crush the BCM. Sepamla's publication is indeed a transitional magazine, a critical section of a literary bridge spanning the differences between Nakasa and the *Drum* writers, and the radically populist *Staffrider*. The critical essays in *New Classic* reflect the invigorating effects of the BC "cultural revolution," and yet the authors and their short stories reveal the retention of a multiracial composition that was cherished by Nakasa. As an individual and an editor, Sepamla was committed to collaborative action among writers and artists that could keep them within an "orbit of interaction" and provide a sense of community despite the bannings and arrests which had become commonplace in the 1960s and increased during the 1970s.

In 1978, Sepamla opened his final issue of *New Classic* with an editorial in which he bemoaned the financial struggles of the publication, and condemned the detention of

[635] In his essay in *I Write What I Like*, Aelred Stubbs describes the heavy drinking and sexual promiscuity of some students as an expression of their "resentments and frustrations" with the lack of organized resistance to apartheid policies in the late 1960s. These frustrations did not necessarily abate even with the formation of SASO, and as the various motivations of the rioters in Soweto suggest, political unity did not always extend into a unified view of morality (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 156).
[636] *New Classic* 5, (1978).

New Classic Trustee Dr. Nthato Motlana and the bannings of *Donga* and *Staffrider*, describing these types of actions as "death to all."[637] Despite these developments, Sepamla was happy to welcome the formation of the Federated Union of Black Arts (FUBA), an organization he founded, and which "brought under one wing artists in the fields of music, drama, creative writing, plastic arts and photography."[638] Although this year marked the end of *New Classic* and Sepamla's career as a magazine editor, as director of FUBA he would continue the work he had begun at *New Classic* and *S'ketsh'* by bringing black artists closer together. The emergence of *Staffrider* as Sepamla ceased production of *New Classic* must have given him hope, for this new publication took the communal activities to which Sepamla had committed himself and turned them into the foundations of the magazine's operational policy.

[637] *New Classic* 5, (1978). *Donga* was banned permanently while only the first issue of *Staffrider* was banned.

[638] *New Classic* 5, (1978). It is hard to reconcile the frustrations with communal ventures Sepamla expressed to Cobden in 1978 with the creation of FUBA and Sepamla's subsequent role as director of the organization. Perhaps this is yet another indication of how precarious life was as a black person in South Africa. Sepamla would direct FUBA until it shut down in 1997; however, immediately prior to its creation, Sepamla was considering abandoning South Africa all together. This uncertainty on the eve of the launch of an arts organization that would enjoy nineteen years of success is a reflection of how bleak the future of South Africa looked in the late 1970s.

7. "I only needed guidance from my own community": *Staffrider* magazine, 1978-1983[639]

"A staffrider is, let's face it, a *skelm* of sorts…A skillful entertainer, a bringer of messages, a useful person but…slightly disreputable."[640] With this opening sentence, *Staffrider* became a literary magazine for the townships in which writers published stories and essays that reflected the confrontational attitudes that often accompanied an adherence to Black Consciousness (BC) and steeled the schoolchildren of Soweto against apartheid aggression.[641] The first issue of *Staffrider*, published by Ravan Press in 1978, was banned by the Publications Control Board within a month of reaching the public for containing material deemed obscene, harmful to race relations, and seditious.[642] Established in 1972, Ravan Press was born out of the Johannesburg publishing office

[639] *Staffrider* 4, no. 1 (Apr./May 1981): 31. Quote from Mongane Serote.
[640] *Staffrider* 1, no. 1 (Mar. 1978): 1.
[641] In a 1980 interview, Mike Kirkwood, who was primarily responsible for the creation of *Staffrider*, described how the name was chosen for this magazine. Not wanting to impose a name from Ravan, Kirkwood's friend Mothobi Mutloatse suggested naming the magazine after those people who rode "staff" on the crowded trains that sped from the townships into the city, hanging on wherever a hand or foothold could be found. Kirkwood liked this name because it "focussed on an area of experience- traveling to work and back- that is central to most black lives in this country." Additionally, Kirkwood appreciated the fact that the staffriders took the same liberties with the railway officials that *Staffrider* sought to take with the government censors ("*Staffrider*: An Informal Discussion," *English in Africa* 7, no. 2 (Sept., 1980): 23).
[642] McDonald, 147. The first issue of *Staffrider* was submitted to the Directorate of Publications for review on 4 April 1978. Cape Town Archive Repository (KAB) P78/4/50.

located in Pharmacy House on Jorissen Street that had printed Spro-cas literature.[643] Taking its name not from Edgar Allen Poe's prophetic bird, Ravan was a melding of the names of its three founding directors, Peter *RA*ndall, Rev. Danie *VA*n Zyl, and Beyers *N*audé. As the termination date for Spro-cas neared, there remained a high demand for its twenty-five titles; in light of this, and the many writers who had begun submitting manuscripts to Spro-cas, Peter Randall advocated the creation of a new publishing house as "an agency to take certain risks. To publish in the interests of social justice."[644]

In his study of apartheid censorship, *The Literature Police*, Peter McDonald acknowledged that soon after its independence from Spro-cas, Ravan earned the reputation of "a radical, risk-taking publisher," despite what McDonald describes as Randall's "prudently pragmatic approach" to publishing "which led him on occasion to

[643] "From the beginning, Spro-cas publications were produced in-house as it were, using the facilities of the Christian Institute," explained Peter Randall, "when Ravan Press (Pty) Ltd was established in the second half of 1972, its initial function was to act as a printer for Spro-cas and Christian Institute publications…however, the company was also intended in due course to publish in its own right" (G. E. de Villers ed., *Ravan Twenty-Five years* (1972-1997), 4-5). The chronology listed in the Spro-cas 1969-1973 Report to the National Conference of The South African Council of Churches held in Cape Town on 1 August 1973 indicates this year as the first year of operation for Ravan. This discrepancy suggests the common purposes of Spro-cas and Ravan, the establishment of the company as a (Pty) Ltd. was more legal prudence than anything else. William Cullen Library Historical Papers (WCHP) A835 C1.

[644] "Radical Regroupings" *To The Point* 16 Jun. 1973, 32A. WCHP A835 C1. de Villiers ed., 4. The Special Programme for Christian Action in Society (Spro-cas 2), was the follow up project to the academic Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (Spro-cas) that had terminated in 1971. Spro-cas 2 was a limited project with an established end point in 1973; as Spro-cas 2 neared termination, steps were taken to establish Black Community Programmes (BCP) as well as Ravan as independent entities. Randall believed that Spro-cas and Spro-cas 2 were successful precisely because they had no interest in self-perpetuation as organizations.

turn down some more controversial works."[645] Randall's prudent leadership was cut short in October 1977 when he was caught up in the government assault on BC organizations and banned for seven years.[646] Robert Michael (Mike) Kirkwood, who was in line to fill the position of literary editor, then assumed the directorial responsibilities at Ravan Press. Kirkwood, a poet and academic who had edited the literary magazine *Bolt*, brought to Ravan "a new political perspective" drawn from his experience as an educator working with black trade unions.[647] In addition to his political perspectives, Kirkwood infused Ravan with what he learned from his discussions of "regionalisms" with Mafika Gwala and Nkathazo Mnyayiza of the Mpumulanga Arts Group.[648] Kirkwood recalled in a 1980 interview that these Natal writers felt neglected by the literary figures of Johannesburg and other major metropolitan areas and they had expressed a desire for a literary magazine that was national in scope, but still acknowledged the importance of

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[645] McDonald, *The Literature Police*, 135. McDonald goes on to describe Randall as "firmly part of the 'dominant white liberal culture'" despite "his openness to new literary developments." As evidence for this claim, McDonald cites Randall's move from teaching to literary publishing in the early 1970s that was motivated by his belief in the "universal" appeal of artists in contrast to the bounded influence of "academics, journalists, and clergy" (McDonald, 136). While Randall's belief in the "universal" appeal of art is similar to the views held by Gordimer, Livingstone, and Nakasa, the statement that he was *firmly* part of white liberal culture should be questioned when considering Randall's involvement in Spro-cas 2 and his decision to shift the resources of White Consciousness Programmes (WCP) to BCP which he considered more important. Additionally, the populist atmosphere he fostered at Ravan by listening to black writers and implementing some of their ideas as described by Mike Kirkwood in his 1980 interview makes one wonder if McDonald's "white liberal culture" is the same culture that Steve Biko railed against in much of his writing.

[646] McDonald, 141.

[647] McDonald, 142.

[648] Mpumulanga Arts Group was based in the Hammarsdale township, located between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The issue of "regionalisms" brought to Kirkwood's attention by Gwala and Mnyayiza was most likely their belief that Johannesburg and Cape Town claimed a monopoly on artistic production. This was almost certainly as much a matter of perception as it was reality. Since they were situated outside these major urban areas they probably felt slighted when South African literature was discussed in terms of the writing being done in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Their focus on regional artistic production should not be seen as a move away from a national culture; rather, by focusing on regions outside Cape Town and Johannesburg they were reaching for a culture that was truly representative of the nation, and not simply the product of two major urban areas.

maintaining the autonomy of regional writers' associations.[649] When he became the director of Ravan in 1978, Kirkwood was aware of the recently banned writers' group Medupe, but it was the young black writer Mothobi Mutloatse, first published in *New Classic*, who made it clear to Kirkwood that "there were a lot of individuals around who were beginning to coalesce into writers' groups [sic]."[650] Kirkwood stated that he "wanted Ravan to have a literary magazine that would respond to the new creative forces inside South Africa," and through his relationships with BC inspired writers like Mutloatse, it became clear that the traditional, top-down editorial policies of Anthony Sampson, Nat Nakasa, and Sipho Sepamla could not accommodate the creativity

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[649] Kirkwood, "*Staffrider*: An Informal Discussion," 22.

[650] Ibid. Medupe was a black writers' group formed in 1977, and subsequently banned in October of that year with a variety of other BC organizations (McDonald, 130). According to Liz Van Robbroeck in her unpublished master's thesis, "The Ideology and Practice of Community Arts in South Africa," the 1970s marked the emergence of overtly politicized art groups and centers. Van Robbroeck describes the origins of the international community arts movement in the 1960s, initiated by the young people of the "new left/hippie generation." Drawing a slightly different conclusion regarding the history of South African community arts, Van Robbroeck places the antecedent to the politicized arts groups of the 1970s in the efforts of missionaries and government departments that established art centers like Rourke's Drift Arts and Craft Centre and the Polly Street Art Centre in the 1950s and 1960s as a method of generating employment and creating recreational facilities for black people (Liz Van Robbroeck, "The Ideology and Practice of Community Arts in South Africa" (master's thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), 29-35). Considering the experience of Thamsanqa (Thami) Mnyele at Rourke's Drift in 1973 makes any link between this mission run institution and the politicized arts groups of the 1970s that were so critical to *Staffrider's* operations seem tenuous. While Mnyele appreciated the meager economic benefits the school provided the rural community, he was unhappy and felt stifled by the academic setting, leaving the school after only eight months. It is not surprising that Rourke's Drift was not a good fit for this young BC adherent who was well versed in the writing and thinking that had inspired Biko. As a member of Mihloti and Mdali and a close friend of politically active writer Mongane Serote, whom he would join in Botswana as a member of the Medu Art Ensemble, Mnyele could not reconcile the sterile Swedish academic program with his desire to be an "intuitive artist" (Wylie, 66). While it is clear that the emergence of BC had a profound effect on these arts groups, Mnyele's feelings of isolation and constriction at Rourke's Drift contrast starkly with the camaraderie he experienced in Medu and make one wonder if these entities are anything more than distantly related institutions. For more on Mnyele see Diana Wylie's *Art + Revolution: The Life and Death of Thami Mnyele, South African Artist* and for his work with Medu see *Thami Mnyele + Medu Art Ensemble Retrospective* edited by Clive Kellner and Sergio-Albio González.

unleashed by the BC "cultural revolution."[651] According to Kirkwood, these aspiring literary talents "wanted a magazine that was generated at the point of writing and functioned as a vehicle for a great number of writers."[652]

In this way *Staffrider* became a magazine whose goal, as stated in the opening editorial, was "not to impose 'standards' but to provide a regular meeting place for the new writers and their readers, a forum which will help to shape the future of our literature."[653] *Staffrider's* policy was "to encourage and give strength to a new literature

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[651] Kirkwood, 22. In 1988, *Staffrider*'s tenth year in publication, editor Andries Walter Oliphant recalled *Staffrider*'s populist leaning and attributed this to its inception in the midst of a "radical community oriented movement initiated by Black Consciousness." Oliphant continued to recount *Staffrider's* participation in efforts to "supplant the coercive manifestations of a racially exclusive and dominant discourse with a mass-based and truly democratic outlook on culture" (*Staffrider* 7, no. 1, 1988, 2). Oliphant's statements were made during the period when the United Democratic Front (UDF) was banned and reconstituted as the Mass Democratic Movement. His statements about "mass-based" (non-racial) culture, and the power of the Charterist groups that marched under the banner of the UDF, belie an underlying tension that ran through *New Classic* and *Staffrider*, as magazines where BC writers expressed their race-pride alongside the stories of white writers (and in the case of *Staffrider*, under the logo of a white-run publishing house). In his survey of Southern African literature, Michael Chapman seems to imply that this apparent contradiction was not as significant in the moment. Chapman explains that despite BC's "marginalisation in the 1980s as a political organization" its "impact on the consciousness of disenfranchised people" was not negated. "There is in fact no decisive break in terms of rhetoric and symbol between the negritudinal impulse of the 1970s and responses, in the 1980s, to the state's declaration of emergency rule." Chapman continues, "many of the writers and artists who in the 1970s had endorsed BC went on to claim affiliations to the ANC" (Chapman, *Southern African Literatures*, 329). Perhaps the most interesting of these was Mongane Serote. An important "Soweto poet," Serote became a high ranking member of MK in Botswana.

[652] Kirkwood, "*Staffrider*: An Informal Discussion," 22.

[653] *Staffrider* 1, no. 1, (Mar., 1978): 1. Literary scholar Michael Vaughan described the style of literature featured in *Staffrider* as *populist realism*, "an aesthetic movement which reflects the emergence of new social and political forces within the dimension of literary culture" (Vaughan, 118). According to Vaughan, these populist realist writers "derived strategic value from their relation to a collective concept," and sought to "make less of their individuality" and to create an atmosphere that could break down the "privileged status accorded to literature within the liberal aesthetics…and give it a more 'popular' character." By categorizing the creation of the new, unifying aesthetic as a reaction of writers who were "simply unschooled in the aesthetics of liberalism," Vaughan fails to consider the debates over literary standards of quality that were printed in *The Classic* and *New Classic* (Vaughan, 133-4). While it is certainly true that these writers were handicapped by Bantu Education, many were also empowered by BC and consciously rejected the standards of measurement they saw as foreign and which considered the writing that was most relevant to their lives to be weak and unimaginative in its reliance on realism and autobiographical forms (Michael Vaughan, "Literature and Politics: Currents in South African Writing in the Seventies" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9, no. 1 (Oct 1982): 118-138). Vaughan's assessment of the popular realism in *Staffrider* which developed in response to "new social and political forces" also evokes the BC/Charterist tension within *Staffrider* that is discussed above in note 652. This magazine emerged after the state's offensive against BC organizations but was clearly inspired by the community driven actions of BC artists and activists. *Staffrider* continued publication in the absence of BC organizations while the Charterist UDF and Mass Democratic Movement gained strength. Using Vaughan's assessment regarding the impact of "new social and political forces" on literary aesthetics, one must then question how these two seemingly contradictory movements of race-consciousness and multiracialism affected literary production. The *Staffrider* stories consulted for this project do not extend beyond 1983 and thus cannot adequately address this later shift in writing style.

based on communities, and to establish important lines of communication between these writers, their communities, and the general public."[654] Breaking from the monarchial policy of a single editor, Kirkwood established an editorial collective of writers in an effort to create a larger base of decision makers for the magazine; however, Kirkwood ultimately placed the bulk of editorial responsibilities with the writers groups and associations whose members were submitting material to *Staffrider*.[655] For Kirkwood, the relationship between artist and audience which Sepamla had tried to foster in *New Classic* was not an abstract or intellectual exercise but a "concrete" matter of connections.[656] *Staffrider* sought to build these connections by employing strictly "non-commercial" methods of distribution. The same groups that edited the material featured in the magazine were responsible for distribution of the finished product.[657] By incorporating writers in the editing and distribution process, Kirkwood was seeking to create a "literary programme" which involved developing young writers and township

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[654] *Staffrider* 1, no. 1, (Mar., 1978): 1.

[655] Kirkwood credited Jaki Seroke and Matsemela Manaka with assuming the major responsibilities in the *Staffrider* editorial collective. Kirkwood estimated that around 500 writers worked with *Staffrider*, in addition to numerous graphic artists and photographers, whose collaboration was the result of "a very broad based cultural energy" (Kirkwood, 24). Yet this collectivist editorial policy proved to be unsustainable and was abandoned after three years. In *The Literature Police*, McDonald discusses the tensions that evolved within *Staffrider* circles in response to Kirkwood's abandonment of "his position as a guardian of the literary" (McDonald, 143). McDonald cites the exchange between Kirkwood and Mbulelo Mzamane over the *Staffrider* Series publication of Mtutuzeli Matshoba's short story collection *Call Me Not a Man* as an example of a conflict which arose as some writers reacted to *Staffrider* material that they felt "did not merit publication" (McDonald, 149-52).

[656] Kirkwood, 26.

[657] Ibid. McDonald quotes a letter from Kirkwood to J.M. Coetzee in which Kirkwood states that "our distribution is 90% hand-to-hand via an expanding network of contributors and unemployed kids." Although this appeared to be a way to avoid the problems Sepamla had encountered with commercial distributors, Kirkwood acknowledged that this system was far from perfect: "at 25c a copy commission [a sixth of the cover price] no-one can make a living out of selling *Staffrider*, and naturally not all the money comes back" (McDonald, 144).

audiences through their participation in the *Staffrider* enterprise.[658] This "literary programme" targeted all members of the township communities through special features like the "Children's Section," "Women Writers," and "*Staffrider* Workshops" that appeared sporadically throughout the issues.[659]

It is this radical break from the structures of conventional literary magazines like *The Classic* and *New Classic* that has made *Staffrider* such a significant and well studied entity in South African literary history and inspired literary scholar Michael Chapman to describe *Staffrider* as "that unique socio-literary phenomena."[660] More than simply a forum to introduce nascent writers to their audiences, *Staffrider* functioned as a printed community center where residents wrote and read about the issues most pressing in their daily lives. While the overt and, at times aggressive, politicization of literature and

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[658] "We see each issue of the magazine as an installment in a literary programme" Kirkwood stated "and we try to make the magazine, in physical terms, sufficiently durable to stand up to that kind of reading over a long period." Here Kirkwood was referring to the fact that *Staffrider* was a shared publication and each issue had to be sturdy enough to survive being passed among many readers. In this interview a comparison was made to *Drum*, where one copy might reach six readers, while Kirkwood estimated that one copy of *Staffrider* would circulate much farther. This can be attributed to the fact that *Drum* was printed on flimsy newsprint that disintegrated after heavy use, but it could also be a result of the increased literacy rates among black people in the 1970s or the BC "cultural revolution" which stimulated an interest in the "modern black culture" *Staffrider* sought to promote (Kirkwood, 27).

[659] By creating a section devoted to an audience of children, *Staffrider* sought to counter the debilitating effects of Bantu Education. Additionally, *Staffrider* expanded on the efforts of Sepamla, and to a degree Nakasa, who sought to encourage township writers, by exposing children to a literary world with which they could identify. "*Staffrider* Workshops" seem to follow the example of instructive essays set by Sepamla when he printed "On Short Story Writing" and "Some Notes on Novel Writing" in the final issue of *New Classic*. The first three "*Staffrider* Workshops" were written by Es'kia Mphahlele and all deal with the short story: tips for writing them well, and critical evaluations of the works of authors like Can Themba and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. The "*Staffrider* Workshops" moved even farther from the more elite debates on South African literature that appeared in *The Classic* by adopting an instructional approach as a way to encourage township readers to express themselves through writing. *Staffrider* also regularly featured profiles of South African writers and artists and printed news articles that kept its readers informed of cultural initiatives and events.

[660] Michael Chapman, Letter to the editor of *The Bloody Horse* 1 (Sept-Oct 1980): 101-2. In this letter Chapman cited *Staffrider*'s legitimate elevation of the sociological above the literary. As a magazine that depended on community arts groups for editing and distribution, early on *Staffrider* may indeed have appeared more like an experiment in community cooperation than a literary venture.

culture may distinguish *Staffrider* from the other magazines in this study, it also grounds *Staffrider* firmly in a South African literary and cultural tradition that was established by publications like *Drum*, *Classic*, and *New Classic*.[661] When Jim Bailey replaced Robert Crisp with Anthony Sampson as editor of *Drum*, readers had rejected the intervention of the "white hand" and desired reading material that reflected their lives and daily interests. Bailey's hiring of Henry Nxumalo and the rest of the *Drum* writers who would form the vanguard of modern South African literary figures were direct responses to readers seeking to identify with the writers and their stories. Despite being a committed "fringe" dweller, Nat Nakasa recognized that during the quiescence of the 1960s, maintaining a black editor at the helm of *The Classic* was of critical importance if his magazine was to

[661] In his 1980 interview, Kirkwood clarified that despite the number of "incidental links between *Drum* and *Staffrider*" those working on *Staffrider* were not consciously thinking about contributing to the "tradition of *Drum*" (Kirkwood, 24). It is interesting to note the uneven way in which *Drum* was treated by *Staffrider*. Mentioned by name, writers like Can Themba, Nat Nakasa, and Es'kia Mphahlele (who was a regular contributor to *Staffrider*) are clearly held in high esteem as literary pioneers. However, many *Staffrider* writers, through critical essays or fictional short stories, derided black South Africans who rejected so-called traditional African customs or culture in favor of an urban cosmopolitanism that was often dictated according to Western or white terms. This disparity between the way the *Drum* writers were treated as individuals and as a category (of educated urban blacks who were thought to be aspiring to Westernized standards of success) is most likely a result of the social context in which these individuals were writing. In the 1950s, many writers were wary of any customs or traditions that could be used by the apartheid state to prove that the backward native was in desperate need of European guidance. By the 1970s and 1980s, Biko and other BC proponents had revived the NEUM strategy of noncollaboration with the apartheid system and awakened many black (and white) South Africans to the fact that people like the *Drum* era writers were operating within a framework established by the oppressor even in their rejection of the identity apartheid sought to bestow upon them. Breaking free of Western ideas of progress and "civilization," the BC inspired writers of *Staffrider* were able to negotiate an identity that responded to the immediate present, but still acknowledged the cultural heritages of black South Africans. One could propose that both *Drum* and *Staffrider* writers were reacting to their social and political situations and working with the immediate present in mind. *Drum* writers categorically rejected a tribal past, while *Staffrider* writers tried to meld a version of the past with their view of the present. Gwala discussed this delicate process in his *Staffrider* Workshop, clarifying that the writer must be careful "to bring out or explore indigenous values without assuming parochial attitudes." To do so would be to fall into a trap of the apartheid state by voluntarily re-tribalizing themselves (*Staffrider* 2 no. 3 (Jul./Aug., 1979): 57).

realize its potential to raise new writers from township communities.[662] Sipho Sepamla based his editorial policy for *New Classic* on the portrayal of the "black experience" in South Africa, and in the wake of the Soweto Uprising he embraced the explosive anger of black townships, allowing it the freedom to course through the pages of his magazine. Thus, *Staffrider* followed these magazines as a publication that printed socially and politically relevant material and created an organizational structure that responded to the demands of the previous decade's "cultural revolution." Paul Hotz acknowledged this lineage in his review of Mothobi Mutloatse's compilation of short stories, *Forced Landings*.[663] "The stories suggest not so much new forms" Hotz qualifies, "as the continuation and amplification of a 'realist' tradition stretching back through [Es'kia] Mphahlele, [Alex] La Guma, [Peter] Abrahams and others."[664] The amplification observed by Hotz was a direct reaction to the seething political and social atmosphere of South Africa during the mid-1970s. As Mutloatse stated in his introduction to *Forced Landings*, "the black community is hungry, and hungrier since 16 June 1976: ever-ready-and-willing to lay its hands on 'relevant' writing, writing by blacks about blacks."[665] Echoing the sentiments expressed by Sepamla and Mzamane in *New Classic*, Mutloatse believed that black writers had a "purpose," even a responsibility to voice the concerns of

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[662] The concept of a quiescent 1960s is drawn from Gail Gerhart's *Black Power in South Africa* and her characterization of black responses to the brutal crackdown by apartheid agents during the Sharpeville emergency.

[663] *Forced Landings* was published as the third number in Ravan's *Staffrider* Series of books. For more on the *Staffrider* Series see McDonald, 321-41.

[664] Paul Hotz, "Forced Together" *The Bloody Horse* 1(Sept-Oct 1980): 89-90.

[665]Mothobi Mutloatse ed., *Forced Landings.*, 1. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Soweto Uprising of 16 June 1976 had a profound effect upon black South African writers. The "Soweto Novels," published in the wake of this trauma, are a testament to Sipho Sepamla's view that folowing this tragedy he became a "historian." These four novels, Sepamla's *A Ride on the Whirlwind*, Mbulelo Mzamane's *The Children of Soweto*, Miriam Tlali's *Amandla*, and Mongane Serote's *To Every Birth its Blood*, can be taken together as a reflection of how black South African's perceived the violence unleashed against them by the state.

their audiences, warning that "no black writer can afford the luxury of isolation from his immediate audience."[666] Keeping the economic hardships of his audience in mind, Mutloatse was cautious in selecting a publisher, seeking one that could control pricing without adversely affecting the distribution of his short story anthology. Mutloatse chose Ravan because of the *Staffrider* dictum to which he refers in the introduction to *Forced Landings*: "black literature is the property of the people loaned to creative writers."[667]

Even though *Staffrider* operated without consideration for the censorship laws of the apartheid state, ultimately, like all the magazines in this study, the oppression of apartheid was a significant factor in determining the literary approach of the publication. The substance and style of the writing in this magazine could not remain independent from the decade long campaign of apartheid censorship and suppression. This assault, as Nat Nakasa had concluded in conversation with Alan Paton, had impeded the formation of a coherent tradition of South African literature. Like his fellow "Soweto Poet" Sipho Sepamla, Mongane Serote recalled that when he began writing, most of the previous generation of black South African writers had either been banned or had already left the country. This was a problem for Serote, who considered writing to be "a social affair-you would like to look out for people who had also written, who could act as a yardstick

[666] Mutloatse ed., *Forced Landings*, 1. Mutloatse draws this warning from a comparison to "the white world" in which writing has become the purview of an elite group of artists who have become detached from their audience in their quest for so-called literary excellence.
[667] Mutloatse ed., 6. With this statement, Mutloatse has summarized what Sepamla may have been reaching for in trying to portray the "black experience" in *New Classic*. In the context of the solidarity encouraged by BC, *a* black experience, became *the* black experience and the creation of literature inspired by *a black person's* experience ultimately became *the* experience of *black people*. Inspired by his life as an oppressed person, a writer like Mutloatse would not claim his work as his own since his writing was an expression of the anger and frustrations of millions of South Africans who were collectively oppressed because of the color of their skin.

for the progress you are making."[668] In his 1980 interview, Kirkwood acknowledged that each generation of black artists was forced to "start from scratch" because state repression had reduced South African cultural history to a "heap of fragments which are cut off from each other."[669] Like the conclusions drawn by Robert Kavanagh and Mbulelo Mzamane about black theater and black literature respectively, Kirkwood believed that this was an inspiring position in which to be, and stated that these writers did not "want to be hemmed in by tradition; they want to draw attention to the validity of cultural action in the present."[670] It was this desire for ownership over the elements of popular culture that *Staffrider* carried forward into the 1980s.

"Art is not Neutral: Whom Does it Serve?": The literary debates of *The Classic* and *New Classic* are continued by *Staffrider* with an emphasis on community[671]

Despite the brutal murder of Steve Biko in police custody and the banning of the major BC organizations in 1977, many *Staffrider* writers held true to the sentiments Biko expressed in his 1970 article "We Blacks." "In all fields 'Black Consciousness' seeks to

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[668] *Staffrider* 4, no. 1 (Apr./May, 1981): 30.
[669] Kirkwood, 24.
[670] "*Staffrider*: An Informal Discussion" 24. This focus on "cultural action in the present" is most likely drawn from the BC synthesis of Fanon's ideas regarding a "national culture" derived from the "national reality." See chapter five for a discussion of Fanon's influence on Biko and the BCM. Fanon's writing on the three stages of colonized literature in *The Wretched of the Earth* applies to much of the material in *Staffrider*. In the first stage the colonized writer mimics the writing of the colonizer, in the second the colonized writer questions his/her adherence to foreign forms and looks to the cultural history (under assault from the colonist) of his/her people. Finally the third stage, which much of the *Staffrider* writing appears to represent, is "combat literature, revolutionary literature, national literature." The writer in this third stage becomes a "galvanizer of the people"; rather than letting "the people's lethargy prevail," the writer seeks to "rouse the people." Fanon explains that "during this phase a great many men and women who previously would never have thought of writing, now that they find themselves in exceptional circumstances, in prison, in the resistance or on the eve of their execution, feel the need to proclaim their nation, to portray their people and become the spokesperson of a new reality in action" (Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 158-59).
[671] *Staffrider* 4, no. 2 (Jul./Aug., 1981): 30-1. This is the title of an essay written by Dikobe WaMogale Martins.

talk to the black man in a language that is his own," Biko wrote, "it is only by recognising the basic set-up in the black world that one will come to realise the urgent need for a re-awakening of the sleeping masses."[672] Biko concluded this article with a prescriptive quote from Guinean president Sekou Toure that emphasized the liberating power of culture: "in order to achieve real action you must yourself be a living part of Africa and of her thought; you must be an element of that popular energy which is entirely called forth for the freeing, the progress and the happiness of Africa. There is no place outside that fight for the artist or for the intellectual who is not himself concerned with, and completely at one with the people in the great battle of Africa and of suffering humanity."[673] Toure's quote situates the artist in service to "suffering humanity," and many *Staffrider* writers agreed, placing value on their work only when it harnessed the "popular energy" all around them. For this reason, Kirkwood and the *Staffrider* editorial board sought to establish connections with their readers whenever possible. Seeking to create a cultural community in which both readers and writers could claim membership, *Staffrider* regularly requested input from its readers and printed biographical artist profiles and interviews as a way for audiences to become more familiar with the writers featured in the magazine.[674]

In Michael Gardiner's unique reference guide, *South African Literary Magazines 1956-1978*, he states that "the young writers in *Staffrider* had little sense of history and

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[672] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 32.
[673] Ibid.
[674] *Staffrider* 2, no. 2 (Apr./May, 1979): 31. In a letter from the Guyo Book Club, members express a desire for more essays on African literature from prominent African authors such as Chinua Achebe, Richard Rive, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. "*Staffrider* Profiles" were particularly effective in creating a sense of community as established authors recalled their own personal journey in the world of literature, which was often white; a process with which many black readers would undoubtedly identify.

only little more knowledge of their circumstances other than the immediate present."[675] While the history curriculum offered to township youths under Bantu Education might easily have been confused with National Party propaganda, the numerous essays in *Staffrider* written by authors seeking to negotiate their place within the international literary community and the many references to liberation movements across the continent appear to contradict Gardiner's statement.[676] Furthermore, Gardiner seems to imply that the limiting of a writer's scope of consideration to the immediate present is an impediment to the production of quality literature, while some writers of *New Classic* and many more in *Staffrider* clearly prioritized the present in a quest for relevancy. Dikobe WaMogale Martins was one such writer who stated in his *Staffrider* essay "that artists should create not for future generations, but for their contemporaries…. We are thus not making a cultural revolution for posterity: this cultural revolution will be important to posterity because it is a cultural revolution for today."[677] Martins considered South African artists to be in a unique position, working in a "post June 1976 uprising era"

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[675] Michael Gardiner, *South African Literary Magazines 1952-1978*, (Johannesburg: Warren Siebrits Modern and Contemporary Art, 2004).

[676] Mothobi Mutloatse's "Night of a Million Spears" is the story of a coup in an African nation (it is implied that it is Zimbabwe). Mutloatse demonstrates an understanding of the Cold War's polarizing effect on African independence. After they seize power, Mutloatse's liberation fighters urgently contact western nations to assure them that there are no communists among the freedom fighters. The newly independent Africans plead for technological assistance to prevent a descent into chaos (*Staffrider* 1, no. 2, 47-8); in his *Staffrider* Workshop, Mafika Gwala compares South African protest poems to Allen Ginsberg's "ultimate protest poem, 'Howl'" which was printed in the third issue of *New Classic* in 1976 (*Staffrider* 2, no. 3, 57); Mutloatse's tribute to poet Agostinho Neto links this third world revolutionary poet to the Soweto inspired poetry in South Africa (*Staffrider* 2, no. 4, 59); "Rastaman in Zimbabwe" was a review of Bob Marley's concert in celebration of Zimbabwean independence, (*Staffrider* 3, no. 2, 43); Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's interview, "Ngũgĩ: Literature in Africa" compares British education in Kenya and Bantu Education in South Africa, as well as the literary production of these countries (*Staffrider* 4, no. 2, 34-6); Sy Moya's "Go Home Simpasa" is set in Nigeria during the independence celebration (*Staffrider* 4, no. 3, 26-27); Nelson Ottah's article "*Drum*: The Inside Story" describes the early years of *Drum*, Nigeria (*Staffrider* 4, no. 4, 31-34).

[677] *Staffrider* 4, no. 2 (Jul./Aug., 1981): 31.

during which agents of the state had demonstrated a willingness to resort to horrific violence as a tactic for establishing control over the townships. Martins believed, in the context of this overwhelming repression, that it was the responsibility of the artist to confront these injustices, and "to refrain from this artistic duty becomes more and more clearly a political act; an act of self-censorship and cowardice."[678]

Staffrider sought to harness the anger of black communities by printing politically charged literature that focused on the immediate conditions under which black people lived in South Africa. This attention to daily life in the townships and the emphasis on a common struggle served as a method for forging bonds between writer and reader. Sepamla, working primarily on his own, found it difficult during the *New Classic* years to develop such a connection. An intimate relationship between artist and audience remained largely unrealized as *Staffrider* entered its second year in print. Illustrator Mzwakhe Nhlabatsi voiced concern with this distance in a 1979 issue of *Staffrider*, stating that "the most disturbing factor in my mind today, about art, is the question of

[678] *Staffrider* 4, no. 2 (Jul./Aug., 1981): 30. Martins' essay provides an interesting point of comparison to Gordimer's essays in *The Classic* and *New Classic*. In these essays, Gordimer proposed independence for writers and their craft, rejecting both state censorship and an "orthodoxy of opposition." Martins suggested that the neutrality Gordimer wished for literature is actually a political act. Martins' view appears to be similar to Camus' "metaphysical concept of revolt" quoted in the previous chapter, in which to refrain from direct action is in itself an act that strengthens the very system one opposes (see André Brink's use of this concept in chapter five note 454). Here Gordimer may be an inappropriate comparison simply because her self-perception as an artist no doubt differed from Martins' view of himself as a writer.

contact between the artist and the black public: whether it's there or whether there is none today."[679] In his article, Nhlabatsi lamented the flow of African art from the townships to the suburbs and overseas, as well as the lack of available historical reference material about black art in South Africa.[680]

Poet Bicca Muntu Maseko followed two years after Nhlabatsi's article and echoed his concerns about the flow of art and artists. "From the townships the best works by our artists disappear into the city suburbs, where they hang as investment items on lounge walls," Maseko lamented, "the common man from whom art originates is left, thumb in mouth."[681] Two issues later, in his *Staffrider* profile, Sowetan sculptor Lucas Seage described this cultural drain in more political terms. "Black artists are exploited by galleries and other liberal institutions" Seage explained, "this will not stop until the system of apartheid is done away with."[682] Like Dikobe Martins, Seage believed that it was an obligation of the artist to participate in the "social struggle," they "must open the

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[679] *Staffrider* 2, no. 2 (Apr./May, 1979): 54. In addition to the attention paid to the artist-audience relationship, *Staffrider* also carried forward the emphasis Sepamla and Nakasa had placed upon communication and cooperation within the community of South African artists. In two "Women Writers" sections of *Staffrider* in 1979 and 1980, the authors "suggest that women writers should keep in contact and share the common themes which have begun to emerge" from them, and that they "should come together as women and try to do some creative writing…writing that will help or encourage other people who might become our fellow writers in the future" (*Staffrider* 2, no. 4, 60 & *Staffrider* 3, no. 1, 44). A key aspect of *Staffrider's* program to draw artists and audiences closer together was providing information about cultural events and happenings that could interest both artists and their audience. Often, literary information bulletins would be included in a section titled "News from Southern African PEN Centre (Johannesburg)." At times these news sections would include pledges of solidarity with those writers who had been jailed or banned (*Staffrider* 2, no. 3, 64; Vol. 3 no. 2, 47). Primarily these sections provided summaries of literary conferences or cooperative experiments such as the "writers' wagon," two kombis (minibuses) full of representatives from Johannesburg area arts groups that drove to visit writers in the Cape in 1979 (*Staffrider* 2, no. 3, 64; Vol. 2, no. 4, 63; Vol. 3, no. 2, 47; Vol. 4, no. 1, 45).

[680] *Staffrider's* dynamic interpretation of its role as a cultural magazine is evident at the end of this article where the publishers responded to Nhlabatsi's concern by listing a book and three journals that were relevant to black South African art (*Staffrider* 2, no. 2, 55). This is something unique to the magazines of this study. While occasionally fictional narrators proposed solutions to characters' problems in the earlier magazines, this is the first instance of a magazine offering a solution to a problem posed in a critical essay.

[681] *Staffrider* 4, no. 1 (Apr./May, 1981): 19.

[682] *Staffrider* 4, no. 3 (Nov., 1981): 18.

eyes of our society to the injustice around them."[683] Clearly influenced by BC, Seage created his art for the man on the street using easily identifiable symbols; his goal was to "conscientise people" through his work. By doing so he hoped that an increased awareness would result in the cracking of the apartheid system, "even if it is a tiny, tiny, little crack."[684]

In the first issue of 1982, Mpikayipheli offered a solution to the artist-audience gap perceived by Nhlabatsi, Maseko, and Seage, proposing that "our aim as artists should be to live within the perimeters of the day-to-day life of our people, and thus to be available to them at all times. Art should never be alienated from the environment which inspires it."[685] Going beyond simply advocating the importance of community for the artist, these *Staffrider* essays differed from the pieces printed in *New Classic*. By specifically identifying the draw of the white suburbs, *Staffrider* essays attributed a cause to the rift that had opened between artists and their township communities. Mpikayipheli's suggestion for closing this gap is an expression of the philosophy on which many community arts groups were founded. The creation of a space for artists within the community where they could work toward non-commercial goals would enrich both the artists and community members. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu stated in the foreword to *Resistance Art in South Africa*, by participating in the creative process,

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[683] *Staffrider* 4, no. 3 (Nov., 1981): 18.
[684] Ibid.
[685] *Staffrider* 4, no. 4 (Mar., 1982): 29. No surname is provided for Mpikayipheli's analysis of T. Jali's woodcuts, "Toward Patriotic Art." However, this individual is most likely visual artist Mpikayipheli Figlan whose illustration adorned the cover of Mafika Gwala's 1982 volume of poetry, *No More Lullabies*.

people can become more than simply objects, "they can transcend their often horrendous circumstances and bring something new into being."[686]

By 1981, it seemed that writers had begun to achieve some success in developing a close knit community of individuals dedicated to creating socially and politically relevant literature.[687] In order to expand this relationship among writers to include their readers, a reevaluation of the act of writing in South Africa was necessary. Like Mbulelo Mzamane, Sipho Sepamla, and Ayi Kwei Armah in *New Classic*, *Staffrider* writers asserted their right to define their own literary standards that accounted for the oppressed and dispossessed status of black South Africans. Miriam Tlali voiced this desire for autonomy from so-called Western literary standards while being interviewed in a 1981 issue of *Staffrider* by asking "why are we tied up by the role the critics assign to us?"[688]

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[686] Sue Williamson, *Resistance Art in South Africa* (Johannesburg: David Philip, 1989): 7. Freire also saw the revolutionary implications of creativity. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire discusses the imperative of cultural synthesis, the open integration of cultures, as a precursor to revolution. The first step in cultural synthesis is investigation which "creates a climate of creativity." This is in direct opposition to the "cultural invasion" of the oppressor which "kills the creative enthusiasm of those who are invaded, leaving them hopeless and fearful of risking experimentation, without which there is no true creativity" (Freire, 180-1). There are significant differences between the context in which Freire created his educational programs in Latin America and the situation that confronted black South Africans; however, the basic premise of "outsiders" and "insiders" working toward a common goal is applicable to South Africa. This dichotomy can be filled with a number of different South African categories of identity, such as urban and rural residents, children and parents, or students and workers.

[687] *Staffrider* 3, no. 4 (Dec./Jan. 1980-1): 14. In an article that describes why a recent exhibition of "committed art" (visual) to be hosted by *Staffrider* had to be cancelled, the authors state "it is clear that there is no artist's movement equivalent to the writer's movement." It should be noted here that not all South African artists were ready to be subsumed into a non-commercial, monolithic mass of cultural producers. Amelia House stated in an article on women writers that they have experiences that are unique and should be brought to their writing; however, they "should not permit it to become limiting" (*Staffrider* 3, no. 3, 46). This sentiment can be applied in a broader sense to the unique experiences of black writers in South Africa. While this experience was a significant source of inspiration, some writers believed that to rely on these experiences alone would limit the range of the writer as Gordimer and Livingstone had warned against in *New Classic*. South African artist William Kentridge agreed with House and stated in an interview that "the art of the clenched fist rings a bit hollow" and the painters too focused on the political impact of their work "reduce their images to systematised diagrams of discontent" and in this process they "create only scarecrows" (*Staffrider* 4, no. 1, 47).

[688] *Staffrider* 4, no. 3 (Nov. 1981): 42.

In a previous issue that year, Bicca Muntu Maseko addressed other black South African artists in more explicit terms, commenting: "we should desist from comparing our lifestyles as artists to those of European and American artists who are responding to their respective environments which are completely different from ours."[689] Maseko's emphasis on "environment" reveals the essence of the black experience that Sepamla sought to portray in *New Classic*. The unique situation of black South Africans in the 1970s and 1980s called for artistic and literary standards that could accommodate the urgency of the liberation struggle that was felt by both readers and writers. In his *Staffrider* Workshop, Mafika Gwala traced this re-evaluation of literature back to the 1950s, stating that "today's blacks have taken the literary initiative into their own hands, following the lead of writers like Can Themba…they [1970s black writers] have simply gravitated into black awareness. Not for literary purposes. But because this black awareness is their experience."[690] Gwala then defended this black South African literary style in the aggressive language that typified many *Staffrider* writers, warning that "people who tamper with Black Consciousness and the Black Experience better watch it from now: the days of paradisal innocence are over."[691]

Staffrider went far beyond *New Classic* as a forum for socially relevant writing as young writers unabashedly submitted their pens in service to the liberation struggle by creating what became known as *committed art*. Committed art was described in

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[689] *Staffrider* 4, no. 1 (Apr./May, 1981): 18.
[690] *Staffrider* 2, no. 3 (Jul./Aug., 1979): 55.
[691] *Staffrider* 2, no. 3 (Jul./Aug., 1979): 56. Despite this strong language, Gwala was not threatening white South Africans. Like Biko and SASO, Gwala acknowledged that both blacks and whites were permanent residents of South Africa, clarifying that "the relation [between blacks and whites] must be of a supplementary nature. No serious black writer can allow white values and white expressions to override his black experience."

Staffrider as "art [that] seeks *intentionally* to engage itself in a challenging and critical way with the social and political realities of its time and place. It does more than simply *reflect* the society which gives rise to it; it expresses a social or political message."[692] Where the protest writing of *Drum* observed the deplorable conditions of township life, the writing of *Staffrider* proposed radical solutions to the observations of *Drum*. Energized by the momentous events in the region: the independence of Mozambique, the community outreach of BC, the resistance of the Soweto schoolchildren, and the murder of Biko and attempted destruction of his legacy, many *Staffrider* writers were compelled to loudly trumpet their perceptions of the political and social state of South Africa. As Kirkwood described it, *Staffrider* was "operating within a particular transitional culture" and once this transition was completed, Kirkwood hoped that *Staffrider* could make a graceful exit from the cultural stage. It is difficult to assess whether the writers who staked out these confrontational positions in their essays intended their utilitarian approach to South African literature to be permanent, but the question asked by David Atwell in *Rewriting Modernity* must have occurred to these writers, "can one remain for long in a state of cultural revolution?"[693] Had the precarious nature of their position been considered by these writers, then it is logical to conclude that by directly focusing their writing on the diverse experiences of black communities, contesting foreign standards of evaluation, and legitimizing politically relevant creative writing, these "cultural workers" were striving to put black writers on a solid footing with which they could join a national

[692] *Staffrider* 3, no. 4 (Dec./Jan., 1980-1): 14. Emphasis in original.
[693] Attwell, 163.

artistic community from a position of strength in which their contributions would be acknowledged and accepted by their white counterparts.[694]

"We will have to *donder* conventional literature: old-fashioned critic and reader alike": Committed literature in *Staffrider*[695]

In Sepamla's *New Classic*, there seemed to be a difference between how strongly the black experience was emphasized in the critical essays and the short stories. In *Staffrider*, much of the fiction matches the essays in their intense expressions of the black experience.[696] The fictional stories printed in *Staffrider* fit within the literary lineage established by *Drum*, *The Classic*, and *New Classic* through their adherence to certain forms, themes and characters that were fixtures of these earlier magazines; and yet *Staffrider* is distinct from these publications in the style of writing it featured. This style, which is direct and more confrontational than the fiction in *New Classic*, reflects both the

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[694] The term "cultural worker" was adopted as a replacement for "artist" at the 1982 Culture and Resistance Symposium and Festival held in Gaborone, Botswana that was the subject of a *Staffrider* news report (*Staffrider* 5, no. 2, 11). For more on this significant five day gathering of artists in opposition to apartheid see *Thami Mnyele + MEDU Art Ensemble Retrospective*, 154-85. Mtutuzeli Matshoba's comments upon the disbanding of PEN (Johannesburg) in 1981 are useful here because they illustrate that although black writers in the early 1980s were unwilling to subordinate themselves to white literary standards, many still felt that this did not negate the possibility of creating a multiracial community of writers. Matshoba pleaded that the disbanding of PEN (Johannesburg) "should not spell an end to the sharing of ideas among writers of different skin pigmentations on the 'neutral' level of the literary arts but that communication channels should be kept open and liaison be maintained at all time to avoid alienation which may possibly lead to antagonism or destructive criticism should one group cross the other's path" (*Staffrider* 4, no. 1, 45).

[695] Mutloatse ed., *Forced Landings*, 5. In Afrikaans, "donder" means thunder. It was incorporated into the urban patois, Tsotsi'taal, to mean assault or to beat up.

[696] Nape'a Motana's "The Poet in Love" is an excellent example of the direct expression of BC by many *Staffrider* writers. Motana's main character is Lesetja, a popular poet. Lesetja regularly writes poetry that "reflects his society," but something in him begins to change and he reevaluates his position and lifestyle as a poet. Lesetja begins to associate with students involved in "the upsurge of Black Consciousness" and he begins to see "beyond parties and shebeens," preferring instead to spend his time reading and writing. Lesetja reads Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and begins to see his beautiful girlfriend as "a cabbage-headed non-white model" who is fit only for "a mere 'release of manly venom.'" Lesetja retreats further into his studies and writes poetry for his muse, Mokgadi, who verges upon ugly but has attracted the poet with her "pure black womanhood from the heart of Afrika" (*Staffrider* 3, no. 1, 14-15).

assertive self-reliance of BC and the more confrontational nature of black resistance to apartheid that was ushered in by the Soweto Uprising. Like the stories of *New Classic*, many of the fictional pieces in *Staffrider* were highly critical of specific apartheid policies, and similar to the black theater groups described by Robert Kavanagh in *Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa*, many *Staffrider* writers suggested revolutionary solutions to the problems their characters experienced. In fact, the urgency of many of the problems experienced by these characters was such that often the authors injected advice or commentary through the words of a seemingly omniscient revolutionary narrator.[697] The dire nature of life in apartheid South Africa engulfed these authors who were not willing to separate their fiction from the everyday reality they experienced. *Staffrider* fiction, like many of the stories in *Drum*, *The Classic*, and *New Classic*, engaged the violence of township life, the tensions between urban and rural life, and the frustrations or guilt of white South Africans; however, the most powerful pieces in *Staffrider* are those that promote community solidarity, confront the generational conflict

[697] The many instances of this in *Staffrider* stories evoke comparisons to the autobiographical realism often featured in *Drum* stories. It seems that in seeking to portray the black experience, these writers were unable to distance themselves from their characters. At times it is difficult to determine whether the writing in *Staffrider* is fiction, autobiography, or political commentary. *Staffrider* displayed an acceptance of realism in multiple ways. In two issues printed in the late 1970s, the publishers followed an example set by the literary periodical *Donga* by printing letters from the Publications Directorate that explained the banning of previous issues, along with Ravan's replies in which they challenged the reasoning behind the bans. The publishers countered that many of the pieces found undesirable were accurate reflections of public sentiment asking, "do they [feelings] not have a right to be expressed?"(*Staffrider* 1, no. 2, 3). These banned pieces "convey fresh and genuine feelings" and "they are *perceptions* of reality" (*Staffrider* 2, no.2, 3). The article "Another Glimpse of Slavery," which was printed in the "Truth and Censorship" section of a 1980 issue, illustrates that in many cases these perceptions were accurate. The anonymous author, allegedly a lawyer, discusses the legal background to Mtutuzeli Matshoba's collection of short stories *Call Me Not A Man* which was banned in 1979. The lawyer cites a recent case which came before the Transvaal Supreme Court in Pretoria, Petrus Mofokeng v. L.A. Becker (Jnr.). This case illustrates the abuses of the parole labor system in a way which makes calling Matshoba's story, "Another Glimpse of Slavery," fictional almost inaccurate. The lawyer concludes that "if to point out the risks involved in such a system is to endanger the security of the state, the Publications Directorate might well find themselves having to restrict the publication of certain Court records" (*Staffrider* 3, no. 3, 37).

in South African life, or stress the importance of self-reliance predicated upon direct action.[698]

The prominence of these three themes can be attributed to the BCM. As a youth driven movement, the BCM stressed community solidarity and encouraged committed action to create the conditions among black South Africans necessary to facilitate mass action against the apartheid state.[699] Not only was solidarity critical to the liberation struggle, but Biko believed that Africans had historically lived in "a community-based and man-centred society" and that the "oneness of community" lay "at the heart" of

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[698] Two stories in particular that deal with white South Africans provide a clear example of how the style of writing had changed and assumed a more confrontational tone. In the first issue of *Staffrider*, Peter Wilhelm's story "Van" takes the frustration of white characters that was portrayed in *The Classic* and *New Classic* to a new level, and not surprisingly was one of the stories that led to the banning of the first issue. Van der Merwe is a white police officer who shares many of the problems of the white characters in *New Classic*: he is overworked, drinks too much and his marriage is unsatisfying (he is sexually impotent and suspects his wife of cheating). The differences become clear when Van goes into his children's room to tuck them in for the night. As he is thinking of how much he loves them he draws his pistol, rubbing it distractedly across his face he visualizes shooting each of his sleeping children in the head, then shooting his wife, "who would be screaming," and then walking out into the yard to kill their domestic servant Ruth before finally shooting himself as the police arrive. These horrific thoughts cause Van to vomit, and he must pour himself another glass of brandy before he is able to sleep (*Staffrider* 1, no. 1, 26-7). Ahmed Essop's story "East/West" also features a security officer; however, unlike the officer in the *New Classic* story "The Butcher Shop," Essop's officer acts upon his frustrations, taking a stand against the injustices which he had previously been required to enforce. One day Essop's security officer, Borg, is instructed to question Ranjit, a holy man who follows the example of Gandhi in his quest for human rights through nonviolent resistance. Borg is so impressed with Ranjit that he resigns from the force and becomes a Hindu ascetic. His former colleagues arrest Borg because he appears to be an unemployed vagrant, as well as a white man who spends too much time with Indians. While he is imprisoned, Borg begins to meditate while his fellow yogis organize a huge protest march. Through his determination, moral leverage, and the support of the massive crowd gathered outside, Borg is able to convince the security police to vacate their office which at one time had been a holy building (*Staffrider* 3, no 4, 35-8, 45). In Wilhelm's story he is not satisfied alluding to the frustration of white South Africans, he suggests that deep psychological trauma awaits those whites who are responsible for apartheid repression. In Essop's story, his security officer makes the conscious choice to stand with the oppressed rather than the oppressors.

[699] In a paper defining BC for a SASO leadership training course in 1971, Biko stated that "the importance of black solidarity to the various segments of the black community must not be understated" (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 52).

South African culture.[700] Reading through stories in *Drum*, *Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider*, this sentiment is manifested in many different ways. In the early stories of *Drum*, it can be seen in the critical view writers take of the crime and violence that fragmented black communities. In *Staffrider*, the call for community consciousness comes out in a more overtly political fashion and the importance of the community begins to overshadow the value of the individual.[701] In these short stories a more nuanced assessment of the urban environment appears than that which had been portrayed in *Drum*, where the violence of the townships was deplored but not critically

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[700] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 30, 43. Margurite Poland's children's story "Vusumzi & the Inqola Competition" extends through three issues and relates the importance of community cooperation stressed by Biko in terms that are comprehensible to children. In the first installment of the story Vusumzi is excited because the Kwazakhele Youth Club is holding an inqola making competition (inquola means "wagon" in isiZulu, these were toy wire cars fashioned by township boys). Vusumzi and several of his friends go in search of wire; they decide to ask Mr. Yeko, owner of a local store, even though some of the boys are afraid he will chase them away. Mr. Yeko's employee initially refuses to give the boys any wire for free, however when Mr. Yeko hears why they need it, he lets them take as much as they can from the empty fruit boxes out back; for, as "a patron of the youth clubs in the township [he] did not like to refuse the request." In the next installment of Poland's story, Vusumzi's inqola becomes very much a work of community cooperation. He gets some paint from his neighbor's lodger, an old man who admires Vusumzi's work. Upon the painter's suggestion, Vusumzi goes to the local auto shop run by Mr. Nene to look for springs to use as the car's suspension. Vusumzi is very nervous to ask Mr. Nene for springs since there are several other men hanging around the shop. But when Vusumzi shows his car, they are all very impressed. Mr. Nene and Boxer Nuxmalo, the intimidating neighborhood tough-guy, take Vusumzi inside to pick out the correct suspension. In the final part of Vusumzi's saga, he is despondent to find that the day before the competition his inqola has been stolen. Vusumzi attends the judging at the community center but pays little attention until the winning car is selected. It turns out to be Vusumzi's car, but it has been submitted by the older boy who stole it. Vusumzi is furious but he cannot bring himself to shout out and claim his car. Suddenly, above the applause, Boxer Nxumalo calls out that a mistake has been made. Nxumalo points out Vusumzi and declares the car to be his, to which others in the crowd who have helped in its creation agree. Vusumzi collects his prize and a handshake from Nxumalo while the thief is led off for punishment. This simple children's story imparts a valuable lesson about community and the importance of being able to rely on your neighbors for support when confronting injustice (*Staffrider* 2, no. 1, 58-9; no. 2, 56-7; no. 3, 62-3).

[701] "It's Necessary" by Papa Siluma is an example of a story in which characters must make individual sacrifices for the benefit of the greater community. Siluma's story is told in the first person by Thembi, who is reflecting on her one year marriage to Maqhawe who has died in exile while on a mission for the liberation struggle. Thembi had married Maqhawe knowing and sharing his political beliefs, "they were agreed that the government that oppressed their people had to go." She recalls their discussions on the need for sacrifice, possibly even death in order to achieve freedom. Thembi feels guilty that she cannot bear the thought of losing her husband in service to the struggle. As Thembi wrestles with the anguish she feels at the loss of her husband she displays her quality as a community minded individual, "but if Maqhawe did not deserve to die, whose husband, son or daughter did? If everyone's loved ones did not participate then the struggle would come to a halt, and clearly that meant giving a free hand to the oppressor." Thembi learns the true meaning of sacrifice, "losing the very things one valued most." She does not rejoice in it, but she accepts this burden and resolves to deal with a life which would now be filled with "whirlpools of destructive self-pity." In this story Thembi shoulders the burden of loss that comes with participation in the struggle. By recognizing that if it were not Maqhawe, it would be another's husband or son, she voices the community solidarity that was a crucial element of the BCM (*Staffrider* 4, no. 1, 10-11).

explored. In the second issue of *Staffrider*, Pam Cox's piece "Forbidden Fruit" subtly engages the differences between organic communities and the artificial residential locations created by the state.[702] Cox's short story about a visit to the Unibell squatter camp in the Western Cape is not clearly fictional or autobiographical. Told in the first person, she begins by marveling at a man's garden which is overflowing with vegetables despite the fact that the nearest water tap is a mile away. The man's fig tree is particularly impressive to Cox and she "wondered for how many years it had been rooted there."[703] As Cox, or her fictional narrator, wanders through town she is "astonished" by the "orderliness" of the houses and the friendly people, "the noises one heard seemed happy" and despite the lack of visible lavatories the place was not overwhelmingly odorous. Cox's discussion of the pleasantness of this community is set up to contrast with her final paragraph, a prayer which appears under the heading "January 1978." Cox prays that the figs from the man's tree "have been sweet in his mouth before the front end loader came to do its work in Unibell yesterday."[704] This brief conclusion would have resonated with those readers who had experienced the apartheid obsession with living space in the form of forced removals, pass violations, or endorsements out of urban areas.

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[702] *Staffrider* 1, no. 2 (May/Jun., 1978): 44.
[703] Ibid.
[704] Ibid. Unibell had been home to around 2,000 families when it was declared a health hazard by the Peninsula Bantu Affairs Administration Board in January 1978. Margaret Nash described Unibell in terms similar to Cox's in a paper delivered by to the Black Sash National Conference in January 1978. The houses were constructed and decorated carefully with well maintained gardens and efficient waste facilities. The Black Sash Report contrasts the "evidence of a desire to make the best of an unpromising situation" in an organic community like Unibell with the shocking violence, "apathy and vandalism" for which many forced communities like "Cape Flats townships are notorious" (2). "Unibell Squatter Camp in Cape Town: Conference Paper Presented at the Black Sash National Conference 1978" http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID=cnf19780316.026.001.000b (accessed Dec., 5, 2010).

The apartheid state's desire to stamp out organic African communities like Unibell is illustrated in Letshaba Thubela's story "Sethokgwa."[705] Thubela begins his story by describing the *Ubuntu* that had been a sign of the "brotherhood and solidarity" that had characterized life in Katlehong Township where residents allowed renters to build shacks in their yards.[706] When the authorities send notices to the landlords that the shacks must be demolished, the people come together under the leadership of Bra Terra and decide to create a new settlement called Sethokgwa on the barren unused land outside the township.[707] After the settlement is established, the bulldozers and police arrive to drive the residents away from their newly built homes. In this story, Thubela's ideas about black solidarity are clearly romanticized.[708] When Thubela describes the Katlehong residents' construction of their new settlement, he notes that it was done at a feverish pace, and in the confusion people often did not know who was living next door. "This of course did not matter," Thubela continued dismissively, "for all blacks regard one another as neighbours."[709] In Mafika Gwala's "Reflections in a Cell," his narrator contradicts the conclusions drawn by Thubela regarding the inherent neighborliness of

[705] *Staffrider* 4, no. 4 (Mar., 1982): 16-18.
[706] *Ubuntu* is the Southern African term for the concept that a person is a person only through other people.
[707] Bra Terra is a figure in this story that emphasizes the need for action. In proposing the construction of a new settlement, Bra Terra, like Sepamla in his 1975 speech, tells the Katlehong residents that "it is useless for us to protest and then do nothing about our situation" (*Staffrider* 4, no. 4, 17).
[708] Thubela's concept of black solidarity seems to resemble the naivety with which BCP activists approached black communities, assuming a certain degree of social cohesion and a unity of purpose. Although, it is also possible that Thubela deliberately wrote in this romantic manner as a way to encourage black solidarity. Another interesting point in Thubela's story that suggests he may have been as distant from "the people" as the BCP and SASO student activists is the comparison he makes when the shack dwellers are forced to vacate others' backyards; "I could not help feeling that our position was analogous to Czechoslovakia in 1939." This reference to Hitler's division of Czechoslovakia indicates Thubela's education, and it is reasonable to question whether his township audience would have appreciated this comparison.
[709] *Staffrider* 4, no. 4 (Mar., 1982): 17.

black people.[710] Gwala's narrator is unsatisfied with his life at Kwa Mashu, explaining that "a man couldn't stand the dull life at the new township, people not knowing one another."[711] A year earlier the historical context for Gwala's narrator's complaints had been printed in a *Staffrider* section called "Voices from the Ghetto" where the interview of "Mrs. M" was titled "Kwa Mashu Speaking."[712] Comparing Kwa Mashu to her former place of residence, Cato Manor, Mrs. M shared Gwala's narrator's complaint about Kwa Mashu; that it was an artificially created, inorganic housing development where neighbors were strangers with little binding them together aside from their physical proximity. For Mrs. M, even though Cato Manor was a slum, it had been her home because of the true sense of community established by its residents. In Gwala's story the narrator laments the lack of entertainment and vitality in the new township full of strangers. Mrs. M's concerns are more immediate ones of safety and security. For, in a

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[710] *Staffrider* 4, no. 1 (Apr./May, 1981): 34-6.
[711] *Staffrider* 4, no. 1 (Apr./May, 1981): 35.
[712] The 1979 interview of Mrs. M was conducted as part of the Killie Campbell Africana Library Oral History Programme. During this interview Mrs. M lamented the destruction of Cato Manor, her old neighborhood, and the displacement of its residents to Kwa Mashu township. Her recollections of Cato Manor are quite possibly idealized, "the life was very free, people were very co-operative with one another…Cato Manor was just a homely place…we had that spirit of humour from one another." But Mrs. M's idealization of Cato Manor was clearly a result of her feelings toward Kwa Mashu, "I say that in Cato Manor we were much better, because of unity which I think is very important. Here [Kwa Mashu], honestly nobody cares for any other person." Not only was Mrs. M distressed by the fact that neighbors were strangers in Kwa Mashu, she was also troubled by what she perceived to be a severance from her customs and culture. Mrs. M then posed a sophisticated view of the hybridization of western and African culture, "maybe I'm outdated, I don't know…But there are some people who are just like me, who are interested in seeing to it that we don't run away from our culture – though we can inherit your Western civilization. There are some parts of your culture that are good, but I still say that there are some parts of our culture and customs which are very good" (*Staffrider* 3, no. 1, 2-3). Gwala's narrator again provides a point of comparison with Mrs. M, as he is considering the label he has been given: "a social problem." "I can't be the man they want," the narrator thinks, "sit in the pub the whole afternoon, fill my stomach with beer and talk a lot of tribal politics; or wear a suit, drive an American car and talk a lot of American-English garbage"(*Staffrider* 4, no. 1, 34). Mrs. M's view of a hybrid culture is remarkably similar to Biko's view that under normal circumstances (i.e. in a milieu without the assault of colonial domination), African cultural elements had a legitimate (and significant) place in a broader South African national culture that included integrated elements of Anglo, Boer, and Indian cultures.

community of strangers, one was unlikely to receive help during an encounter with the ubiquitous bands of marauding tsotsis.

In the first issue of *Staffrider*, Miriam Tlali proposes community solidarity as a defense against violence, but in her BC laden, politically charged story "Soweto Hijack!," the perpetrators of the violence are agents of the apartheid state.[713] Tlali begins her story in a large crowd of Sowetans who had gathered at the YWCA for transportation to Steve Biko's funeral in Kingwilliamstown. As they waited to board their busses, the mourners were attacked by police officers and many Sowetans were herded into crowded *kwela-kwelas* (paddy-wagons). On the way to jail, several black constables rode in the back, raining down blows and abuse on the grieving prisoners. "You, the people of Soweto! What do you think you are? Just who do you think you are anyway?" screamed the "policeman-cum-soldier."[714] This refrain of "you, the people of Soweto" is repeated several times in the span of a few paragraphs, creating the impression of a community that is bound together by something more than just their residency in Soweto.[715] Once in jail, the mourners continue to set an example of solidarity in action. "Those who had 'lost' all their possessions and purses would also be provided for. 'After-all we are all one family', we all agreed."[716] Tlali's story, while valorizing the solidarity of the Sowetan prisoners, also acknowledges the emerging leadership of the youth in the

[713] *Staffrider* 1, no. 1 (Mar., 1978): 12-21. Tlali's story is an excellent example of the realism that permeates these township short stories. She is the narrator of this story and it is unclear whether this is a work of fiction or an autobiographical recollection of events she experienced.
[714] *Staffrider* 1, no. 1 (Mar., 1978): 13.
[715] Tlali's narrator offers politicized commentary throughout the story. While the prisoners are sharing what little money they have in the hopes of providing bail for some, the narrator's seemingly offhand remark is a not so subtle reminder of 1976: "Most of us did not know each other but we had suffered together, and our plight had propagated a latent spirit of unity – something the people of Soweto have had to learn through their long history of endurance" (*Staffrider* 1, no. 1, 15).
[716] *Staffrider* 1, no. 1 (Mar., 1978): 16.

liberation struggle. Arriving at the jail, several prisoners wonder where they are, and a girl who had been arrested with them answers from experience, "this is the Meadowlands. They are leading us to the cells. Many of our school-mates were detained here. I know."[717] Later it is revealed that this seasoned prisoner is a mere twelve year old girl. The next morning the young girl's detained school-mates wake the new prisoners with songs of freedom. "Their songs of hope, assurance and determination resounded through the sombre prison surroundings" observes Tlali's narrator, "they were going to fight on without flinching in spite of the hippos, the teargas, the bullets, the detentions, the bannings and the shackles…until Azania is free!"[718] As Tlali brings her story to a close, the prisoners gather in prayer for a ceremony timed to coincide with Steve Biko's funeral. A tall, young girl is chosen to lead the service and after she speaks she asks for "one of our mothers here to pray for us."[719] Appealing to the gathered group, the young girl settles on Tlali's narrator who is suddenly nervous about praying before a crowd, but summons enough courage to fulfill the task given to her by this confident young girl. Throughout this scene, and earlier in her story, Tlali uses the categories of mother and daughter as a way to establish relationships between the female prisoners, but also as method of illustrating a shifting power dynamic. In jail, the young girls are the

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[717] *Staffrider* 1, no. 1 (Mar., 1978): 15.
[718] Ibid. "Hippos" were the armored vehicles used by the South African Defense Forces in the 1970s. This hulking vehicle, measuring over three meters high and almost seven meters long, became an intimidating fixture of the townships during the unrest that followed the Soweto Uprising. "Azania" was the name adopted by Africanists for a "truly liberated country" and carried forward by the BCM. Azania was taken from *Black Mischief*, the 1932 novel written by Evelyn Waugh. Waugh mistakenly informed several PAC members that Azania was the name of a once powerful African kingdom. None of the short stories in *New Classic* used this subversive term to refer to South Africa (Halisi, *Black Political Thought*, 59n14).
[719] *Staffrider* 1, no. 1 (Mar., 1978): 19.

leaders who dictate the terms of behavior to their elders, who in turn respond as if they were daughters obeying their mothers.

Early in 1981, Mothobi Mutloatse's "Mhalamhala 1981" was printed in *Staffrider* and serves as an excellent example of a modification of the *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* story to fit a post-Soweto Uprising South Africa in which leadership in the liberation struggle had been assumed by the younger generation.[720] Additionally, Mutloatse makes it clear in his story that he believes the roots of the South African nation lie in rural areas, asking of black urban dwellers "why rootless black slave, why your aimless wandering and aloofness?"[721] In a reversal of the traditional *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* structure, the father has been lost to the city when the son, living in an apartheid established "homeland," happens upon a newspaper photograph of his wayward father with some urban hoboes. The son heads for Johannesburg and after some searching finds his father. Reunited, the son drives his long-lost father and his hobo "comrades" back to the reserve, "surely, ancestral spirits were on the move behind the scenes, motivating, rearranging the course of events, redirecting the destiny of not only Father and Son, but also of a beleaguered

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[720] Thirty years after *Drum*'s *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* stories, the basic form persisted in *Staffrider* as a way to speak out against the corrupting influences of a modern urban setting. "It Does Not Help" (*Staffrider* 2, no. 2, 38-9) is the story of a young woman who ventures into the city to prostitute herself to earn rent money; she ends up getting drunk and raped but no one seemed to care. "Heavy News" (*Staffrider* 2, no. 3, 7-9) is the story of two rural men who have gone to the city to work in the mines but end up fighting with two other workers over women and they lose their jobs without getting paid. "Some Kind of Wounds" (*Staffrider* 3, no. 3, 15-19) contrasts the moral values of a rural boy and an urban boy. "The Windflower" (*Staffrider* 4, no. 1, 40-4) is the children's version of *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* where the characters are insects. "Pikinini's Adventure" (*Staffrider* 5, no. 2, 7-10) is a tale of the pure rural African who becomes contaminated by drink and eventually loses his job.

[721] *Staffrider* 3, no. 4 (Dec./Jan. 1981): 39. This opening paragraph is fairly typical of *Staffrider* stories in which the thoughts of the author and narrator become enmeshed in a critique of South African society which often only loosely ties into the plot. Mutloatse's criticism here seems to be directed at urbanized Africans. BC adherents were often critical of other Africans who were seen as elite assimilationists, many of whom included the *Drum* writers of the 1950s. This criticism is similar to that which was leveled by Africanists like Anton Lembede at the *amakholwa* who directed the actions of the ANC in the first half of the twentieth century.

people."[722] It is crucial for the son to reunite his father with their people because the father is the traditional Head of his people who have been "awaiting his role in chieftaincy-ever since he had lost his mind after going to Johannesburg to visit relations there."[723] As the father and son near their village, the old sage blows his mhalamhala (kudu horn) to call their people together and the decision to fight against the corrupt powers ruling the reserve is made. "We'll liberate ourselves…and then we'll march further and liberate our brothers and sisters in the cities too."[724]

On the surface, Mutloatse's story resembles the *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* form. However, there are significant differences which firmly place this story in the vein of BC writing. The father and son leave Johannesburg not to raise cattle and create a lineage in the countryside, but to gather forces with which to return to Johannesburg as liberators.[725] The patriarchy often seen in *Drum* era *Jim Comes to Jo-burg* stories is absent from Mutloatse's tale. When the Father urges caution in challenging the evil forces of the land, the son politely corrects him, "you're wrong Father…freedom does not wait for anybody."[726] In Mutloatse's story, the son is the hero-figure, rescuing his father, and then

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[722] *Staffrider* 3, no. 4 (Dec./Jan., 1981): 41.
[723] Ibid.
[724] *Staffrider* 3, no. 4 (Dec./Jan., 1980-1): 42. Mutloatse is essentially presenting the opposite of SASO and BCP attempts at conscientisation through community development. BCP and SASO activists were typically educated, urban students, and here Mutloatse is suggesting that traditional leaders will have to gather numbers from the rural areas and liberate the masses of urbanized South Africans.
[725] For this father and son, their own personal welfare comes second to that of their people, both rural and urban. This indicates the importance many black South Africans placed upon the struggle for liberation in the 1980s. Education, family stability, and one's own life often came second to the collective struggle for freedom.
[726] *Staffrider* 3, no. 4 (Dec./Jan., 1980-1): 42. Later, when the Father is discouraged by the lack of men available to him among all the women of his village, his female hobo companion reminds him that "liberation does not only wear trousers, it also happens to wear a dress." By employing the son and a female companion as critical advisors of the wayward chief, Mutloatse alludes to a breakdown in the traditional patriarchy of South African society that allowed for the emergence of the young male and female leaders of the UDF and Mass Democratic Movement in the 1980s.

gently shepherding him along a course of action that will liberate the oppressed people in the reserves as well as those in the cities.

The shift toward young hero-figures in *Staffrider* stories is inescapable. These protagonists are often educated, community minded, politically active youths who bear an unmistakable resemblance to the SASM student activists of Soweto. The stories that feature the student leader character often revolve around a theme of generational tension.[727] Where Mutloatse's father character is open to his son's advice, other fictional elders were not so flexible. Considering Lewis Nkosi's comments in *Home and Exile* regarding the animosity his generation felt toward their elders as a result of their loss of land and freedoms at the hands of Europeans, and Mutloatse's apparent criticism of urbanized Africans like Nkosi in "Mhalamhala 1981," it is reasonable to propose that as successive generations of South Africans failed to overcome the oppression of colonialism and apartheid, the anger of younger generations continued to grow.[728] An understanding of this surging generational resentment is necessary to appreciate how powerful and prevalent the student leader character is on the pages of *Staffrider*. In his

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[727] In these stories, the student leader character is not always a school-going child. For purposes of simplicity the student leader characters embody the educated, politically and socially conscious youth power that drove the revitalization of internal protest in South Africa. The student leaders that appear regularly in these stories distinguish themselves from their parents by displaying a critical awareness of the political challenges facing black South Africans and a willingness to take action to meet these challenges.

[728] See Benedict Carton's *Blood From Your Children* for an examination of the generational tensions that emerged during the late nineteenth century in colonial South Africa as young men and women negotiated the competing demands of homestead patriarchs and settler authorities. At the end of his book, Carton focuses on Bhambatha's 1906 rebellion in Natal where generational tensions, along with other trigger factors such as onerous taxes and excessive labor demands ignited widespread anti-colonial violence. Some of the heightened generational friction that fueled this uprising emerged after a poll tax was levied only on unmarried young men, the primary wage earners of the time. This additional colonial imposition carried with it ironic implications: it gave young men, in the eyes of an encroaching white order, new social recognition as men powerful enough to be taxed by colonial authority, as if they were already the heads of households. In this way, the *Staffrider* generational conflict over politics follows a much longer tradition of youth in revolt.

study of apartheid education policies, Jonathan Hyslop makes note of the shift in family dynamics that took place between the 1950s and 1980s and the emerging "tendency of young people to impose their political will unilaterally on their elders."[729] If one looks through the pages of *Drum*, *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider*, a sense of frustration with the elder generation's unwillingness to take action becomes apparent. Seeing the emasculation of adult males through unemployment and abuse by the system of white *baaskap*, these young people were witnessing the future that awaited them as long as the status quo prevailed.[730] The "shift in authority relations within the family" that Hyslop observes can be traced through the fictional characters featured on the pages of *Staffrider* as the youth rejected this destiny and began to assert themselves politically and socially.[731]

In the stories of *Staffrider*, the assertion of power by the younger generation is often illustrated through conflict between parent and child. "Lone Black Woman" by Morongwanyana is an excellent example of a story that exhibits these tensions and has a

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[729] Jonathan Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle*, 70.

[730] "Baaskap" was the Afrikaner term for white domination, or the system of white masters and black servants. In *Staffrider* stories those who had submitted to this system were often dismissively described as a "yes baas," meaning "yes master."

[731] Hyslop, 71. Many *Staffrider* stories included some element of generational tension. Two early stories that feature plot developments that are uniquely South African are Miriam Tlali's "The Point of No Return" and Mbulelo Mzamane's "Sitha." In Tlali's story, a young couple is discussing the man's decision to lead a pass-protest march to the prison. The woman is frantic and emotional as she is pregnant with their child. Throughout the story, the man references his father's passive acceptance of the status quo as an example he refuses to follow. The man is angry with himself for creating another soul to be oppressed. Tlali's story is overtly political and didactic in that the man explains how his position as head of the family is meaningless without freedom (*Staffrider* 1, no. 2, 29-32). In "Sitha," a daughter maintains a sexual relationship with a local gang leader despite her father's disapproval. One day the father catches the two of them together and beats the gangster. The daughter, Sitha, has a boyfriend whom she is happy with and yet at the end of the story she goes with the gangster to ensure the safety of her brother and her boyfriend (*Staffrider* 1, no. 3, 5-6). In Mzamane's story, generational control must be subverted to deal with the reality of everyday survival in the townships. *Staffrider* also featured stories with a more universal theme of generational conflict, such as Xolile Thabo Mavuso's "Sweet are the uses of Adversity" in which two star-crossed lovers elope against the wishes of the girl's father (*Staffrider* 1, no. 4, 47-48).

strong underlying BC message.[732] Ma Chauke works as a live-in domestic servant for a wealthy, progressive white family in the suburbs of Johannesburg. Rarely able to see her family in Soweto, Ma Chauke is disturbed by the gap growing between herself and her five children that leaves her feeling like a stranger amongst her own family. She does not like how politically active her eldest daughter has become, and she worries that her younger children are being swept up in the liberation struggle as well. Ma Chauke believes that "the student leaders" are to blame, having "eroded the authority of parents."[733] She cannot understand why her eldest daughter wastes her time at "Power" meetings, wondering "what's so special about this Power?"[734] Ma Chauke is representative of the older generation of South Africans scorned by many of the writers in *Staffrider*, what Biko and other BC thinkers would consider a "non-white." BC activists believed that "non-white" South Africans were broken by the systematic racism of the apartheid state and overwhelmed by their inferiority complexes which drove them to

[732] *Staffrider* 4, no. 3 (Nov., 1981): 36-37.
[733] *Staffrider* 4, no. 3 (Nov., 1981): 37.
[734] *Staffrider* 4, no. 3 (Nov., 1981): 36-37. Throughout the story, Ma Chauke reveals how oblivious she is to the experiences of her children and other township residents by questioning why her twins' standard three school books are so torn and ratty when white master John's books are in pristine condition. She also becomes annoyed with the way the smallest breeze creates a dust storm in the township, and after spending a night and day in Soweto "she was ready to go back 'home'" to the white suburbs of Johannesburg.

strive for "whiteness" even though the pigment of their skin made this a futile quest.[735] Like many other *Staffrider* stories, in the final scene, the folly of Ma Chauke's beliefs is exposed. During a social gathering, Ma Chauke is completely shocked when she overhears her progressive madam comment to her husband that she would lynch any black who interrupted her party, including Ma Chauke. Recalling past disagreements with her daughter Val over the benevolence of liberal whites, the story ends with Ma Chauke acknowledging that her daughter had been right all along. According to Biko, black attitudes like those of Ma Chauke reflected the effects of long term oppression, "they have been made to feel inferior for so long that for them it is comforting to drink tea, wine or beer with whites who seem to treat them as equals. This serves to boost up their own ego to the extent of making them feel slightly superior to those blacks who do not get similar treatment from whites. These are the sort of blacks who are a danger to

[735] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 48. Freire calls this "the existential duality of the oppressed, who are at the same time themselves and the oppressor whose image they have internalized." Freire, like Biko, believed that this duality must be solved before liberation could occur. "Accordingly," Freire explained, "until they [the oppressed] concretely 'discover' their oppressor and in turn their own consciousness, they nearly always express fatalistic attitudes toward their situation" (Freire, 61). Frantz Fanon, whose writing on the inferiority complexes of the colonized and superiority complexes of the colonizers influenced Biko, explains the dilemma experienced by black people like Ma Chauke in terms of "a genuinely Manichaean notion of the world." Eager to make this point in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon appears relieved, "there, we've said it – Black or White, that is the question" (Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, 27). Fanon explores this question through interracial sexual relationships or desires, "the woman of color and the white man" and the "man of color and the white woman." Subconscious concepts of "good" and "bad" pepper Fanon's psychological analysis of race relations. At the end of his chapter on the "man of color," Fanon warns that "from the moment the black man accepts the split imposed by the Europeans, there is no longer any respite; and 'from that moment on, isn't it understandable that he will try to elevate himself to the white man's level? To elevate himself into the range of colors to which he has attributed a kind of hierarchy." Ma Chauke's children embody the proactive approach Fanon advocates in his next sentence, "we shall see that another solution is possible. It implies restructuring the world" (Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*, 63). For those inspired by BC, the restructuring of the world began within themselves and radiated outward.

the community."[736] Ma Chauke has fallen victim to "the false belief that we are faced with a black problem" rather than realizing that "there is nothing the matter with blacks. The problem is WHITE RACISM and it rests squarely on the laps of the white society."[737]

The structure of this story is a common one in *Staffrider*. Children assert themselves and their views of appropriate political action in the face of resistance from their parents. Through plot developments, the fallacy of the parents' views is exposed. This is not always a smooth process, and occasionally this generational friction ignites a blaze of familial violence. "The Motherly Embrace" is a brief story written by Mothobi Mutloatse which underscores the difficulties assertive children often posed for their parents.[738] This story is also one in which the sellout character, first seen in *The Classic*, is responsible for the downfall of the student leader.[739] Samoele Sejanaga is a shy, bright young student with a serious stammer. "The spirit of political awareness was in him like

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[736] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 23. See also Bheki Maseko, "The Digger's Closing Day," *Staffrider* 4, no. 2 (Jul./Aug., 1981): 5. Sipho, a construction worker, comes to work before the Christmas holiday for a braai (barbeque) and to collect his pay. Told by his bosses not to wear overalls, he "was going to show them that though he was a trench digger he could dress." Sipho bought an expensive new suit and shirt and shoes to match. When he arrived at work he was told to dig a trench along with his fellow employees. Unable to rebel because of his financial straits, a humiliated Sipho ruined his new clothes in the process of digging. Sipho's tragic flaw here was not his vanity, but his desire to impress the whites on their own terms, by demonstrating his ability to conform to Western standards of fashion.
[737] Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 23.
[738] *Staffrider* 1, no. 3 (Jul./Aug., 1978): 48.
[739] Funda Ntuli's story, "In the Twilight's Embrace," is another story in which the righteousness of those involved in the struggle is contrasted with the guile of the sellout. In Ntuli's tale, the narrator's husband has been arrested for possession of banned literature and pamphlets advocating industrial strikes. Throughout this brief story, the narrator struggles to support herself and her child without her husband. One night, Nkululeko, her husband's greatest friend, the man who got her the job that has ensured the survival of mother and child, arrives at her house and gives her an expensive watch; he then takes her in a "hot embrace." Initially dazed by his advances, she snaps to, driving him from her home with "words fit to make him feel ashamed for the whole of next year." It becomes apparent to the reader that the whispered rumors of Nkululeko's activities as an informer were true. The lecherousness that drove him to condemn his friend makes him a pathetic as well as despicable character (*Staffrider* 4, no. 4, 36).

a plague" and in order to get his thoughts out he turned to the written word, "simple words written in a simple manner for simple people – not intellectuals."[740] Sejanaga's history teacher began to take notice of the boy's "political integrity" and since the teacher was "one of those queer characters found in Matebelekwane [Sejanaga's homeland] only, he took leave to canvass for the boy's recognition- as a political upstart- from the security branch."[741] That night the police, acting on the sellout's tip, arrest the young student. A week after Sejanaga's arrest, his father suffered a nervous breakdown and was committed to a mental institution. Sejanaga's mother goes mad as well, storming the detention facility and demanding to see her son. The mother causes such a scene that the authorities give Sejanaga a brief respite from the ruthless interrogation he is undergoing. As Sejanaga is brought into the lobby, he rushes to his savior and "the loving mother embraced her son. With an okapi knife which had been hidden in her bra. Samoele would stammer no more."[742] In this shocking story, the parents, as "law-abiding Christians," were disgraced by their son's arrest, and the mother's anger is directed at her son rather than the unjust system which criminalized critical, independent thought. The sellout in this story was so warped that he believed the boy's acute mind and inclination

[740] *Staffrider* 1, no. 3 (Jul./Aug., 1978): 48. Mutloatse is again drawing a distinction between "the people" and educated elites. It is difficult to discern from his writing in *Staffrider* who the targets of his anti-elitism are: the assimilationist amakholwa who founded the ANC, the intellectuals who divided the liberation movement over perceived strategic differences in the 1950s, or the student activists of the BC movement in the 1970s? Perhaps Mutloatse is rejecting all political organization and initiative that did not have its roots in whoever or whatever he considered "the people" to be?
[741] *Staffrider* 1, no. 3 (Jul./Aug., 1978): 48.
[742] Ibid.

toward political thought were dangerous characteristics worthy of a police report rather than qualities to be encouraged and cultivated.[743]

The student leader and the sellout characters can be read as two opposite poles, respectively representing the proactive approach to liberation that was inspired by the Soweto Uprising, and the complicity of "non-whites" who played an active role in their own subjugation. In two 1978 issues of *Staffrider*, Letshaba Thubela published excerpts from a work in progress in which the student leader heralded the emergence of youth power. "I, Teacher, Humble Servant" and "The Take-Over" are installments in the story of a young teacher, Tshepo, and his pursuit of power within the structures of Bantu Education that favored older, more pliable teachers.[744] "I, Teacher, Humble Servant" takes place during a meeting of the Morung North Circuit teachers, who have been called together for a visit by a representative of the Minister of Bantu Education, Inspector Von

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[743] For other instances of the sellout in *Staffrider* see: "Soweto Hijack" and Miriam Tlali's surprised comments on the viciousness of the black constables: "Human beings could not possibly do this to other human beings- especially of the same flesh, colour, and blood" (*Staffrider* 1, no. 1, 14). Mtutuzeli Matshoba's "Call Me Not a Man" (*Staffrider* 1, no. 3, 17-9) where the sellouts are also black constables working with white police; in Mothobi Mutloatse's "The Patriot" (*Staffrider* 2, no. 2, 25-8), the sellout is again a teacher. In this story, the typical *Staffrider* parent-child conflict is reversed when the teacher ignores the protests of his wife and father and joins security forces fighting "communists" in the North. He returns home to find that despite the service to his country, he is still treated like a fourth class citizen, and his wife and parents have disowned him and moved to where he cannot find them. Michael Siluma's "The Rebel Leader" (*Staffrider* 2, no. 2, 40-1) describes the metamorphosis of a righteous man into a sellout in jail; Matshoba's "The Betrayal" (*Staffrider* 3, no. 3, 32-5) features a similar theme. Bheki Maseko's "Mximbithi" (*Staffrider* 4, no. 2, 4-5, 47) is a portrayal of the sellout as a sycophant in the workplace. In this story, for all the sellout's pandering to whites, he cannot gain a position of power, which is contrasted with another worker who refuses to submit to white baaskap and quits, becoming more successful at another job.

[744] *Staffrider* 1, no. 3 (Jul./Aug., 1978): 26-7; *Staffrider* 1, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1978): 50-54. See Hyslop, *The Classroom Struggle*, for a discussion of the "ambiguity" of teachers' political positions, "some teachers, fearing loss of their relatively prestigious employment, took deeply conservative positions. Others, feeling the pinch of economic hardship, responded to popular radicalism with alacrity" (Hyslop, 23).

Graan.[745] When the meeting begins, Inspector Von Graan speaks to the teachers about the validity of Bantu Education and warns against "some unscrupulous elements determined to use the teacher and the child alike to further their own political ends."[746] Throughout the speech Tshepo fumes to himself and counters each point made by Von Graan; Tshepo's anger grows as he observes the teachers around him who seem to be accepting the Inspector at his word. In the final scene of this section, Tshepo alone remains in the auditorium as all the teachers take a break prior to a question and answer session. A seated Tshepo is furiously making notes on the meeting memoranda, using the inspector's own information to construct an argument that exposes the contradictions inherent in the system of Bantu Education. Tshepo has distinguished himself from his fellow teachers, most of whom did not even read the memoranda. Tshepo sets an example for the reader by refusing to blindly accept the word of the Inspector and critically engaging the material he has been given while formulating his opposition to these policies.[747]

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[745] In Thubela's story, a sharp division between teachers and principals is observable as the principals are described as "nincompoops," "lackeys," and "lowly slave-drivers" while they direct the teachers, who are described as "meek sheep," into the auditorium. Tshepo observes this divide and remarks to another assistant teacher, "I resent this master-servant relationship…you might think we were not all teachers." Tshepo continues to question why principals should be revered when they have had no special training or schooling beyond what all teachers are required to complete. The other assistant teacher, who is much older than Tshepo, replies that etiquette requires it and compares principals to Tshepo's father. "That is exactly what I mean" Tshepo explodes, "this is not a gathering of sons and fathers, or of daughters and mothers for that matter. This is a gathering of professional people." As such, Tshepo reasons, all should converse as equals. Immediately after his outburst Tshepo felt pity for the older teacher, "shameful pity, worse than death itself" (*Staffrider* 1, no. 3, 26). Tshepo seems to realize that this elderly man is a victim of the apartheid system that has ruined his ability to see beyond the master-servant relationships around which his whole life has been structured.

[746] *Staffrider* 1, no. 3 (Jul./Aug., 1978): 27.

[747] Tshepo's actions in this section are strikingly similar to those of O.R. Tiro whose logical deconstruction of the ideology of separate development in his incendiary 1972 graduation address exposed the hypocrisy of the implementation of apartheid.

In Thubela's second installment of Tshepo's story, "The Take-Over," all the teachers are gathering for the annual conference of the local branch of the Transvaal United African Teachers' Association (TAUTA).[748] The election of new executive committee officers is the central focus of this part of Thubela's story. While en route to the meeting, Tshepo arranges for his friends to nominate him for the position of Chairman when the time comes.[749] Prior to the elections, Tshepo speaks to the assembly only once in response to the Chairman's speech regarding the relationship between teachers and students. Tshepo acknowledges student unrest, but challenges the Chairman's assessment of the causes of this conflict stating that "to clamp down on students without trying to find out in depth what their dissatisfaction is about is an exercise in futility."[750] Tshepo concludes by condemning his "lily-livered brethren, the fence sitters" for failing to recognize the duty they have as teachers to "restore sanity" to the system of education in South Africa.[751]

As the time for elections nears, Tshepo becomes increasingly nervous. After the sitting committee is disbanded, the returning officer calls for three nominees for Chairman. Immediately the prior Chairman is nominated along with another "not-so-youthful gentleman." Tshepo begins to worry that his friends have deserted him, when the returning officer calls on "a dwarfish old man" for the last nomination. The elderly man stands and enthusiastically nominates Tshepo; to which the audience responds with

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[748] *Staffrider* 1, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1978): 50-54.
[749] As the meeting begins, Tshepo's opinion of the executive committee becomes apparent as he observes the "tired old men and frumpy old women, vying with each other to appear youthful and vigorous. How grim" (*Staffrider* 1, no. 4, 51).
[750] *Staffrider* 1, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1978): 52. Published in 1978, this story is no doubt searching to explain how the schoolchildren of Soweto could have been driven in such numbers to face police bullets.
[751] Ibid.

excited cries of "young b-l-o-o-d, y-o-u-n-g…b-l-o-o-d."[752] Tshepo wins the position of Chairman in a landslide and the entire executive committee, with the exception of the experienced treasurer, is voted out of office. Tshepo's first act as Chairman is to request that the former executive committee have dinner with the new committee members that night. It is during this dinner that Tshepo is told that their Branch of the TAUTA owns no machinery for printing circulars or pamphlets despite the fact that the Branch has a budget surplus of seven thousand rand. Tshepo observes to himself, "this group of antiquated administrators has been putting all they could into the Branch. Working selflessly on the wrong side of the facts towards a wrong goal."[753] Only now does Tshepo realize the scope of the problems besetting the Branch.

In the first story, Thubela displays a palpable distaste for those who exercise authority in the system of Bantu Education. In addition, those teachers who were enthralled by the assumed importance of these apartheid functionaries are equally scorned by Tshepo who alone demonstrated a willingness to challenge the established power structure through diligent work. In the second story, the focus shifts to the TAUTA, which Tshepo discusses with his cohorts as a body that is not officially recognized and thus "cannot give instructions to anybody except its adherents. The only thread that holds this mighty organization together, is our irreproachable reverence for our noble calling."[754] In "The Take-Over," as in "I, Teacher, Humble Servant," there is a definite divide between old and young; however, in this second story it is not as clear cut.

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[752] *Staffrider* 1, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1978): 53.
[753] *Staffrider* 1, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1978): 54.
[754] *Staffrider* 1, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1978): 51. Here Thubela is acknowledging the prominent role assumed by schoolchildren and their teachers in the struggle for liberation.

The fact that Tshepo's leadership was secured by an old man when Tshepo's young comrades failed in their duty to nominate their friend indicates that age is not an automatic determinant of commitment. In addition, Tshepo's willingness to ask for counsel from the old Executives shows his pragmatic approach to leadership. Enduring their passive aggressive slights at his age, Tshepo puts aside his personal feelings for the sake of the crippled Branch. The true conflict between young blood and old is illuminated in the debate over purchasing machinery. The former council members seem to think that saving money is a goal in itself, rather than a means to achieve a goal. The treasurer states that "It is our duty to look after the money of the Branch, not to spend it extravagantly."[755] Under Tshepo's guidance, the duty of the council will be to actively respond to the needs of the teachers and the students in the district, rather than maintain a budgetary surplus. Although Tshepo is a teacher, he possesses the most important quality of the student leader, a predisposition toward meaningful action.[756]

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[755] *Staffrider* 1, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1978): 54.

[756] Amelia House's story "Awakening" serves as an example of the importance of this trait to educated young Africans (*Staffrider* 2 no. 1, 8-10). The issue of *Staffrider* containing this story was banned under the Publications Act of 1974. In a letter to Ravan Press from the Publications Directorate which was published in Vol. 2, no. 2, this story by Amelia House is cited as a reason for the banning. House's community is listed as Kentucky, USA and her facility with Afrikaans leads the censors to believe this is a pseudonym for "someone more closely connected to South Africa," a banned person. House had previously had some poems published in Vol. 1 no. 2, and later would have an essay on women writers published in Vol. 3 no. 3. In the Publications Appeal Board files for these two issues (Vol. 1, no. 2 and Vol. 3, no. 3) held in the Cape Town Archive Repository there is no mention of Amelia House's name despite the review of these issues by government censors (KAB P48/6/101; P80/10/146). In "Awakening," Eric is a young teacher in Cape Town on his way home from a day at the archives when he is accosted by several *skollies* (tsotsis, gangsters) on the train. As he hands over his watch he feels "a sadness at the waste of their lives. They could be making a positive contribution to their community… [instead] they bolstered their man-hood with *dagga* (marijuana) and knife fights. None of them had regular jobs so they preyed mainly on 'decent people' in their own community." While Eric looks down upon these tsotsis, he recognizes that "although the community feared them, their ready wit and sense of humor were admired and copied" (*Staffrider* 2, no. 1, 9). Eric survives his encounter with the tsotsis only to be confronted with a far more dangerous force when he gets to the train station, the police. The policemen accuse Eric of being drunk, and upon his protests that he never drinks, the policemen promptly douse him with brandy and

The *Tsotsi's* Metamorphosis into the *Student Leader*: Two decades of literary and social evolution

Like the sellout, in *Staffrider* the tsotsi also provides a foil to the hero in the student leader character. Mpumie Cilibe's story "Overtime" places the tsotsis and a community minded youth who seems to fit the mold of the student leader in a situation where their differences are made painfully clear.[757] Nzwaki is an "office girl" who has accompanied her boss home one night to work at a party his wife is hosting. Nzwaki has taken on this extra burden because her husband is unemployed and they badly need the extra income. Because the bus only runs halfway to her home, she decides to walk the final leg of her journey rather than risk a taxi driver stealing her hard-earned ten rand note. On the walk, she is attacked, thrown into some bushes and gang raped at knifepoint by a group of tsotsis. A young man named Zizi happens to be returning along this same path from a funeral where he was preaching, and upon his approach, the tsotsis scatter. Dazed with pain Nzwaki says "Please *Bhuti*, take your turn and take me home after you have finished."[758] The young man is stupefied by this request until he can stutter a denial and offer to help her home. In this brief comparison, the tsotsis are exposed as animals that would attack a woman who is the sole breadwinner of her family, and the young man

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drag him to jail. In this story, Eric is educated, somewhat community-minded, and his thoughts clearly follow the pattern established by students involved in the liberation struggle; however, he does not fit the criteria of the student leader for he is not action-oriented. While other students are in the street protesting, he has been in the library working. He allows himself to be victimized first by the tsotsis and then by the police without struggling or resisting. Once in jail he is exploited and humiliated by his cellmates, until a benevolent white police officer calls Eric's father to come retrieve his son. Eric is an intellectual without a doubt, but he is far too passive to be a student leader and through his lack of action he allows for his own emasculation.

[757] *Staffrider* 5, no. 2 (1982): 26-7.

[758] *Staffrider* 5, no. 2 (1982): 27. *Bhuti* means brother in isiZulu.

demonstrates that he is indeed community-minded and action-oriented when he stops to help the woman home after speaking at another's funeral.[759]

This contrast between the tsotsi and the student leader reflects a real shift in the lives of urban African youths. In *Bo-Tsotsi*, Clive Glaser described the emergence of "young activists" as "powerful new role models" in the early 1970s, and states that by the end of the decade, "school and gang identities [had] polarized."[760] While this was not a sudden or clearly defined split in an urban youth identity that was often "blurred and ambiguous," Glaser clarified that "the gang member and the committed senior student, each with his own style and value system, acted as the most important alternative role models for the large floating majority of youths."[761] According to Jonathan Hyslop's analysis, Bantu Education lay behind this polarization of identity. Hyslop categorized the rapid expansion of the Bantu Education system in the late 1950s as a state response to the urban crisis of the 1940s and 1950s initiated by the rise of an uncontrollable, often unemployed and delinquent youth population. In their efforts to reduce the pool of potential tsotsis by moving youths from the streets to the classrooms, state officials may have mistakenly considered students to be a more malleable group; however, the chronically underfunded Bantu Education system combined with the lack of employment opportunities in the 1970s gave these uncontrollable youths a symbol against which they could direct their anger and frustration. It is somewhat ironic that while Bantu Education provided an alternative to the tsotsi lifestyle, it also created a dense network of young

[759] Many funerals in the late 1970s became politicized events where speakers would use eulogies as opportunities to denounce the repressive state and revere those who had died in service to the struggle.
[760] Glaser, 162.
[761] Glaser, 163.

people who eagerly embraced the message of BC and a "common purpose" of political activism.[762] Cilibe's story "Overtime" touches upon that which provoked the most violent clashes between tsotsis and students: women. Glaser specifically mentioned the students of Morris Isaacson High School who "'disciplined' criminal elements during the 1970s" and Orlando High School students who had a "reputation for forceful reprisals against gangsters who molested schoolgirls."[763] Quoting former student Jake Msimanga, Glaser neatly summarized the solidarity and assertiveness of the 1970s student population: "there would be no school for two or three days[after an incident]…people had no faith in the police. People would go out, even teachers would go out together with the students, to hunt the thugs, apprehend the thugs, bring them back into the schoolyard and thrash these guys."[764]

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[762] Glaser, 163. Glaser singles out former Turfloop students, O.R. Tiro in particular, for bringing BC to Soweto high schools in their capacity as teachers. Observing that BC generally spread through the high schools prior to the secondary schools, Glaser notes that in many of the new schools constructed after 1972, "an atmosphere of mounting political assertiveness" rapidly grew where the older schools that had "experienced many years of political vacuum" were slower to become politicized (Glaser, 162).

[763] Glaser, 165. These students did not limit their protection to young girls; Glaser cites an incident when students of Orlando North Secondary School responded to the cries of a female teacher who had been caught near the school. These students stormed off school grounds and chased down the two fleeing men (one was chased for over a mile), stoning one and beating the other to death (Glaser, 166).

[764] Glaser, 165. The fact that the hunters would bring the thugs back to the schoolyard indicates the power of the student identity. Not only did they consider the yard an appropriate place to dispense justice, any thugs who were not killed would certainly link the beating to the school and the students, and receive the message that schoolgirls were off limits.

The willingness of these students to assume the role neglected by the police is an excellent example of the importance of action to the student leader.[765] Mothobi Mutloatse's 1982 story "Mama Ndiyalila" is a tribute to the Soweto schoolchildren of 1976, and pays homage to their committed action.[766] Mutloatse's main character is a young schoolgirl named Maba, who is running errands with a family friend, Mr. Mosa, when he receives a notice to report to the police station immediately. Mr. Mosa was a former teacher, "who had resigned some fifteen years back in protest against the introduction of the offensive, inferior and sectional system of education."[767] Mr. Mosa is taken into police custody for trying to organize a parents' meeting to protest against "a medium of instruction which the young people recognised as the language of the oppressor."[768] Maba is initially scared, but immediately after Mr. Mosa is arrested she finds courage and confidence, going directly to another student activist and planning a march to protest both the medium of instruction and the arrest of Mr. Mosa. When her collaborator asks if they are rushing their plans, Maba replies "nothing is too sudden, because we don't want to be caught with our pants down. Nothing is too little in this struggle. Quick and decisive – they must not follow the example of our parents who

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[765] See Isak Niehaus's article "Towards a Dubious Liberation: Masculinity, Sexuality and Power in South African Lowveld Schools, 1953-1999" for a troubling example of how this assertion of power by the youth spun out of control at times. Niehaus explores male students' exertion of power in response to male teachers' sexual encounters with schoolgirls. Not necessarily protecting these females for their own sake, these male students were protecting what they considered to be their property. For many of these male students, the righteousness of the struggle overrode any moral or ethical duty toward responsible sexual contact. In their quest to build (or breed) a liberation army, these boys often exploited and victimized women by denying them their right to choose their own sexual partner, and the terms of these sexual engagements; essentially denying these women control over their own bodies. Niehaus's article explores the historical background to the stories of *New Classic* and *Staffrider* in which "the struggle" served as an excuse to reject any and all forms of social or moral control.
[766] *Staffrider* 4, no. 4 (Mar., 1982): 5-9, 48.
[767] *Staffrider* 4, no. 4 (Mar., 1982): 6.
[768] Ibid.

should have stood firm when the system was first introduced."[769] The night before the march, Maba again meets with her fellow activist who complains that "there is too much apathy in the community. We've got to act *now* while the iron is still hot."[770] Mutloatse's story establishes Maba as the action-oriented student leader that should serve as a role model for readers. Other *Staffrider* stories dealt with the imperative of decisive action by creating a plotline in which the passive, apolitical character is ultimately victimized by the actions of the apartheid state. At times in these stories, the characters realize the error of their ways; in others the reader is left to judge the actions of a thoughtless character.

Michael Siluma's story, "A Conversion" is one such *Staffrider* story in which the author uses an apolitical character as a way to deliver a message about the importance of coordinated political action directly to readers.[771] Siluma's story is laden with the message of solidarity and reflects some of the anti-elitism that has been observed in Mutloatse's stories. In this story, Mxolisi has come to the hospital to visit his well-educated and gainfully employed cousin, John, who is recovering from a savage beating he recently received from a white shop owner. As he relates his tale, John becomes agitated, making wild threats about destroying the white man's shop or shooting him in the head. Mxolisi patiently leads his cousin to seriously question how his problem can be solved, to which Mxolisi answers "unity."[772] Mxolisi then warns his cousin not to assume, because of his education and his salary that he is above white discrimination,

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[769] *Staffrider* 4, no. 4 (Mar., 1982): 7.
[770] *Staffrider* 4, no. 4 (Mar., 1982): 9. Emphasis in original.
[771] *Staffrider* 2, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1979): 6-8.
[772] *Staffrider* 2, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1979): 8.

"we must remember that it is only a matter of WHEN we shall come face to face with these problems, just as you have now."[773] "Only a few months ago I invited you to a Hero's Day commemoration service and you told me you were not a politician" Mxolisi chided his cousin, "I hope that what has happened to you knocks some commonsense into your so-called educated head."[774] Participation in the "people's struggle" is critical, Mxolisi tells his cousin, "for it is you and I who are going to be free, not only a selected few."[775] Through Mxolisi, Siluma emphasized the need for coordinated mass action against the oppression of apartheid and warned that for those who avoided active participation, it was only a matter of time before the struggle was forced upon them by the various agents of white repression.[776]

The most powerful themes expressed in *Staffrider* fiction were those that were developed around the virtues of the student leader, community solidarity built upon youth driven action. Making the comparison between the tsotsi of the 1950s and the student leader of the 1970s illustrates just how significantly the social and political tensions in

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[773] *Staffrider* 2, no. 4 (Nov./Dec., 1979): 8. Emphasis in original.
[774] Ibid.
[775] Ibid.
[776] Miriam Tlali's narrator in her story "Soweto Hijack!" falls into this category. "I had never been in prison before" she reflects upon her situation, "throughout all my life, I had tried by all means to avoid any confrontation with the police. For a so-called second class citizen who had lived all my life in the city of Johannesburg I had really been fortunate enough to have achieved that unique distinction in a place where it was almost impossible not to be a criminal. I had obeyed almost all the unjust laws I had often felt I was under no moral obligation to honour. Yet there I was" (*Staffrider* 1, no. 1, 14). In "My Friend, the Outcast" by Mtutuzeli Matshoba, an old woman is victimized by a corrupt housing official because she appears meek and unlikely to protest (*Staffrider* 1, no. 2, 11-15). See Ahmed Essop's story "Film" for a group of Muslims who "were law-abiding citizens" that "did not want to get involved in politics." However, when they held a rally protesting a local movie that depicted the Prophet Mohammed, the police dispersed the apolitical Muslims as ruthlessly as they would a black anti-pass protest (*Staffrider* 1, no. 3, 29-30). In Daniel Kunene's "The Spring of Life," the main character is bedeviled by his out-of-order pass book; despite following all the steps to rectify the inconsistencies of his pass, he is still endorsed out of the urban area where his wife lives. It is only when he breaks free of his police captors and burns his pass book that he successfully reunites with his wife (*Staffrider* 4, no. 4, 21-3, 26-7).

South Africa affected literary production. On the pages of *Drum*, the tsotsi appeared as a dangerous character, but also as an assertive response to the illegal existence lived by urban Africans. *Drum* articles and stories both portrayed these gangster figures as admirable for the power they commanded and the perks that come with such power. In *Staffrider*, the tsotsi does not receive the same admiration and is instead seen as a destroyer of communities, spreading fear throughout the townships. The tsotsi is the antithesis of the unity BC activists strove to create among the oppressed of South Africa. In *Staffrider*, the student leader becomes the character who wields power outside the traditional structures of the state and the family. The 1970s saw marked shifts toward more overt, confrontational short story writing and the black writer's embrace of a new idol, the student leader, and a new nemesis, the tsotsi.

This study has not considered any issues of *Staffrider* beyond 1983, the year the UDF was formed. Had the sample set of *Staffrider* been extended into the mid-to-late-1980s it is likely that the conclusions drawn above regarding the significance of BC would have to be tempered to account for the rise of internal ANC activity and a return to Charterist alliance politics. Nevertheless, the stories and articles printed in *Staffrider* between 1978 and 1983 are heavily indebted to the community consciousness inspired by BC, which was not confined to black writers, but taken up by literary activists like Mike Kirkwood. Kirkwood's community consciousness, on which the early structure of *Staffrider* was based, was indistinguishable from the populism that stimulated the "revolutionary political cultures" in the townships during the 1980s, which Jeremy Seekings described in his study of the UDF as "the decade of the toyi-toyi and the

necklace, the comrade and the collaborator, of ungovernability and people's power."[777] There is little doubt that the political culture of the 1980s would not have been possible without the BC driven revival of internal political activism during the 1970s. While Anthony Marx has discussed the ideological battles over the legacy of BC between certain political movements and their resistance to multiracial alliance politics after 1977, Michael Chapman has indicated in his survey of Southern African literature that there were fewer impediments to the transition from an assertive "negritudinal" attitude to a more cooperative "non-racialism" in the literary field.[778] Chapman used the 1982 Culture and Resistance Festival in Botswana as an example of a gathering in which cultural workers acknowledged the significant impact of BC on their fields while using "a language of non-racialism" that suggested the growing influence of ANC alliance-type politics.[779]

It seems that while black writers in the 1970s had aggressively defended their right to portray the "black experience" according to their own terms, as they adjusted to the political and social realities of the 1980s, they became more comfortable

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[777] Jeremy Seekings, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 23. The toyi-toyi was a high-stepping type of dance that was derived from guerrilla training methods used across the border. It is difficult to describe the sight of hundreds of people toyi-toying at once; the coordinated movements create the illusion of a single, pulsating organism. See the movie *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony* for clips of a toyi-toying crowd that leaves the impression of a large, agitated snake moving through the street. The "necklace" was a punishment the comrades used on collaborators. A tire soaked in petrol was hung on the sellout like a necklace and set alight. The brutality of this punishment is perhaps not surprising when considering the chaos that accompanied the "ungovernability" of the townships.
[778] Chapman, *Southern African Literatures*, 329, 369.
[779] Chapman, *Southern African Literatures*, 369. Chapman makes it clear that this Festival was not without confrontation. Nadine Gordimer and other white authors who remained within South Africa were criticized for enjoying white privilege. This illustrates the intense politicization of everything in South Africa. Gordimer who actively worked against apartheid came under criticism simply for being white and living in the land where she was born.

incorporating this racially specific experience into a broader category of South African literature. In this way, the multiracial alliances that emerged during the 1980s in both the political and artistic arenas owed much to the BC inspired populism that had invigorated *Staffrider* as a social and literary venture.

8. Conclusion

The four magazines examined in this thesis form a natural lineage. Nat Nakasa made a name for himself as a journalist in Johannesburg at *Drum*. While writing for this legendary magazine he made the connections that would enable him to launch his own, more sober, literary magazine: *The Classic*. Ironically the connections that facilitated his success in South Africa also led to his exile and ultimately his suicide in the United States. Sipho Sepamla acquired the remains of the CIA grant that had sustained *The Classic* and used these remnants to launch *New Classic* as a magazine that paid respect to Nakasa's original version while accommodating the influence of an emerging Black Consciousness on authors in South Africa. Sepamla fervently believed in collaboration among artists and through his magazine he sought to promote cooperative artistic organizations. Although Sepamla may have been discouraged by his own communal activities in the late 1970s, another magazine had been born from the populist, community-oriented movement stimulated by the swelling Black Consciousness activism encouraged on the pages of *New Classic*. This new magazine, *Staffrider*, was the creation of a publishing house that was born from an activist ferment together with the Black Community Programmes (BCP) that employed Steve Biko after his university days. *Staffrider* lived up to this common ancestry by creating an operational strategy based on community consciousness and cooperation.

These four publications provided vital spaces for emerging writers to experiment with style and content as they developed their craft, debated the purpose of their art, and negotiated their place in a repressive society. Small literary magazines with low barriers of publication were in high demand as evidenced by the core group of writers that regularly appear throughout this genealogy of magazines. The early issues of *The Classic* give the impression of a *Drum* writers' reunion. Likewise, *The Classic* and *New Classic* were the launch pads for many writers who would play an integral role in *Staffrider* as contributors and editors. In retrospect, these magazines constitute a segment of the literary tradition that many South African writers feared was destroyed by apartheid censorship policies. In essays lamenting this disjointed past, writers posed literature as a valuable tool in the creation of a unified culture that had the potential to do far more than entertain. Many writers believed that literature held the key to developing individual understanding and tolerance in a society rife with racial animosity.

Although these magazines shared a common lineage, they often diverged from one another as their editors steered their publications through the complicated web of apartheid censorship legislation searching for readers. *Drum* was a popular culture magazine that revealed an early infatuation with the literary. Shortly after its creation, *Drum* owner Jim Bailey made it clear that his magazine would respond to the tastes of a black urban readership. *Drum's* regular short story section was dropped in 1958, though it is unclear whether this was a decision made to accommodate the demands of readers who were no longer interested in short stories, or whether this was a business decision designed to allot more space in *Drum* to pin-up girls and township soccer reports.

Emerging from this *Drum* world of shebeens and tsotsis, Nakasa designed *The Classic* as a more serious journal of the arts. Focusing primarily on literature, prose and poetry, *The Classic* featured critical essays and interviews that depict authors uncomfortable with the politicization of literature and the looming threat of censorship. Nakasa also included sections on visual arts as well as recurring essays on musical and performance arts. Despite the fact that Nakasa's journal lacked the flash and allure of *Drum*, it is reasonable to conclude from the evidence available that Nakasa also sought to respond to the tastes of black township readers. Nakasa carried on the *Drum* tradition of short story contests and actively encouraged nascent township authors. It is clear from the first few issues of *The Classic*, published before Nakasa was forced into exile, that he was searching for a way to bring diverse forms of artistic expression together between the covers of one journal. Logistically, this was a difficult task. The binding of the first issue was of poor quality and to the chagrin of subscribers, the four photographs that were included often came loose and were lost by readers. Changing printers, Nakasa struggled to achieve the quality necessary to accurately capture visual arts (such as paintings and sculptures) while holding down the cost of his magazine. Nakasa was able to include pen and pencil drawings and later editors would have more success including photographs in the magazine. While Nakasa has often been characterized by later BC critics as an elite, "Anglophile," distant from the masses of oppressed South Africans, the magazine he launched and the editorial course he charted seem to contradict such a one-dimensional assessment. Far from the "bourgeois" concept of "high art," issues of *The Classic* included art sections dedicated to school-age children and graphics designed by

high-school artists. This intermingling of the visual art created by children and the textual art constructed by prominent South African literary figures in *The Classic* foreshadowed the importance of collaborative artistic expression that would be seized upon by Sipho Sepamla and later by the publishers of *Staffrider*.

Sepamla's resurrection of Nakasa's magazine did not survive long. However, in these five issues Sepamla confronted both the changing appearance of the South African literary scene and the rapid expansion of black political activity within South Africa spurred by the revolutionary ideas of BC. Sepamla's magazine was overrun by poetry, so much so that he had to plead with his readers for prose short stories. This explosion of poetry in the later 1970s owes as much to the successes of Oswald Mtshali and Mongane Serote's published volumes of poetry as it does to the plasticity of poetry as a literary form well suited for public performances in settings of cultural and political revivals. Many of the short stories that were printed in *New Classic* were distinct from predecessors in their ancestral publication, *The Classic*, in the way dialogue was conducted in the vernacular spoken on the Rand, the Tsotsi'taal mixture of English, Afrikaans, SeSotho, and Zulu among other African languages. The use of this Tsotsi'taal is a striking indicator of how the audience for Sepamla's literary magazine had narrowed to a specific segment of township-dwelling South Africans. Sepamla did not venture outside the textual arts in *New Classic*. It is plausible to suggest that Sepamla avoided mixing the visual and the written in *New Classic*, considering this the domain of the other publication he edited, the theatre magazine *S'ketsh'*.

The magazine that Sepamla welcomed in his farewell editorial had no such qualms about mixing visual and written artistic expressions. In fact, *Staffrider*, under the direction of Mike Kirkwood, blurred many formerly distinct lines in the realm of art. Writers acted as editors; illustrators acted as critics; photographers acted as distributors, and the publishers acted as litigants publicly defending their magazine against the encroaching censorship of the Publications Directorate. *Staffrider* seemed to be a blending of the styles of *Drum*, *The Classic*, and *New Classic* with the added punch of aggressive social commentary. Kirkwood's populist-publication included serious literary articles mixed in with flashy photography spreads and intricate illustrations that complemented the fiction and poetry of the magazine. As different as these magazines seem, both *Drum* and *Staffrider* were ultimately dedicated to delivering material that satisfied the desires of a township audience. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, subject to incredible measures of repression as the apartheid state reacted to swells of black political activism, these township readers were presented with increasingly politicized fiction in *Staffrider*. The shebeen culture of Sophiatown had given way to a political culture that coursed through the streets of Soweto in the winter of 1976. The political awakening of the urban populations of black South Africans owes some debt to the advances of BC on the fields of culture and community development. During this BC "cultural renaissance," art became more explicitly functional as many artists submitted themselves to the struggle.

By 1983, it seemed as if the debate over art and politics that had filled the pages of *The Classic* and *New Classic* had been resolved in *Staffrider*, or at least those who

advocated the complementary nature of political activism and artistic expression had shouted-down those who held to a belief in "art for art's sake." In the charged atmosphere of the 1980s, it is not difficult to see why those who advocated a separation of politics and art may have tempered their protests of so-called "committed art." Many writers who contributed to *Staffrider* asserted that to reject the demands of the liberation struggle when creating literature was no less a political act. It was merely an act that reinforced the power of white supremacy. In a decade when sellouts were "workshopped" and necklacing was a common township spectacle, it was dangerous to even appear as a supporter of the status quo. This was the "orthodoxy of opinion" that Nadine Gordimer viewed as a more insidious form of censorship, and Sepamla had feared would result in "blatant pamphleteering." Reading much of the realism-dependent fiction in *Staffrider*, it appears that some pamphleteers had slipped past the community-based editorial collectives and had their work printed in the magazine. In seeking to assess this outcome, it is instructive to consider the mission and goals of the Spro-cas 2 initiated Black Community Programmes. The goal of these BCP activists was not so much to complete a specific project within a community as it was to develop the capacity of these community members to think critically and devise solutions to the problems they saw around them. Likewise, it is possible that the publishers of *Staffrider* were not as concerned with the "quality" (considering the reevaluation of literary standards that had been underway in the decade before *Staffrider*, this term remained remarkably vague) of the writing as they were with developing the capacity of the writers to engage their

surroundings, and develop self-confidence by participating in a creative, collective exercise.

The debate over the political and artistic that took place on the pages of these magazines was part of a larger question of purpose that plagued black writers: what was the point of creating art in a repressive society, and consequently, what need did the artist satisfy? As stated above, audience factors heavily into any consideration of purpose. Nakasa was tailoring his magazine to a wide audience, including both domestic township dwellers and international literary figures (not least of which was his CIA funded American sponsor). Nakasa was clearly conscious of the social-relevance of his writing, and yet was still loyal to a concept of literature that was independent of political demands. Sepamla was far more direct in publishing his magazine for black township readers and thus created an editorial policy that lauded depictions of the "black experience." There were natural consequences to this policy, namely the publication of increasingly aggressive writing that was derived from the "black experience" of discrimination and dislocation. Sepamla was wary of these developments, and felt distant from the impatience of young BC activists; however, witnessing the savage exchanges between the police and the students of Soweto in 1976 convinced Sepamla that he had a responsibility as an editor to allow for the expression of black anger on the pages of his magazine. Sepamla's decision to view himself as an historian marks a significant change from the self-perception of Nakasa, who tried unsuccessfully to remain independent of the social and political forces swirling about him. *Staffrider* followed the trend of *New Classic* by firmly situating itself within the specific milieu of the ungovernable townships

of the late 1970s and 1980s. It is clear from the stories of writers like Miriam Tlali and Mothobi Mutloatse that the publishers of *Staffrider* were unwilling to distinguish between prose, poetry, and political commentary.

It is difficult to discern how a wider audience of township dwellers not directly involved in the creation and distribution of *Staffrider* received the magazine. This is a critical aspect of any expanded study of these magazines; determining audience can illuminate who was reading and responding to these debates among literate artists. Determining reader motivation is instructive as well. What were they searching for? While some assumptions can be made about *Drum* readers (individuals seeking entertainment perhaps through a peek at Dolly Rathebe in a skimpy outfit), it is more difficult to determine why people read *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider*. The entertainment derived from these magazines no doubt appealed to a more select segment of the population of South Africa. In his book on censorship in South Africa, Christopher Merrett recalls a story of a street vendor who advertised *Staffrider* by holding a copy aloft and shouting "knowledge."[780] It would be interesting to know how effective this vendor was in moving copies by advertising knowledge. Along with the purpose of the writer, the function of writing merits further consideration. In a society bereft of a quality system of education, these literary magazines moved to fill a void in the lives of black South Africans. Whether these literate artists could adequately fill this void is a more difficult question to answer. A comparison can be made here between the efforts of these artists and the experiences of BCP and SASO community development activists. As

[780] Merrett, *A Culture of Censorhip*, 83.

Freire made clear in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the revolutionary educator must act according to the needs of the community, not according to what he or she believes the community needs. BCP and SASO activists struggled with their community development projects when the community members believed that the projects were imposed from above rather than growing from the community itself. Likewise it is necessary to investigate further whether the contributors to *The Classic*, *New Classic*, and *Staffrider* were developing their subject matter *from* their readers or imposing these stories *on* their audiences. Untangling this relationship would clarify how these writers fit within a larger population of oppressed South Africans.

During the BC "cultural revolution" described in chapter five that followed the psychological revolution led by Steve Biko and SASO, writers and artists actively worked to situate themselves within their audiences. It is during this "cultural revolution" that the relationship between artistic expression and political emancipation becomes truly tangled. In formulating Black Consciousness in the South African context, Biko drew heavily on Paulo Freire's ideas about liberation education. One key element of Freire's strategy for helping individuals evolve from "objects" to "persons" was encouraging creative, critical, thinking. As noted above, Freire was not as interested in the end result as he was the process; by critically engaging the outside world, oppressed individuals could recover a degree of control that had been lost though their oppression. This is similar to the way BC inspired artists approached their craft. Through the process of creation (a story, a song, a sculpture) these individuals were asserting the worth of their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Artistic expression was just one way in which

an individual could become more than an "object" (a non-person, non-white) and develop a sense of self-worth. Through this creative expression, the oppressed individual took a step toward depriving the oppressors of what Biko considered to be their most powerful weapon: "the mind of the oppressed."

While this movement to conscientise the black population of South Africa through the production of literature and the arts was an incredibly powerful political dimension of Black Consciousness, the informal community-based groups that sprang up in the 1970s served many additional social needs that were created by the repression of apartheid. These groups provided a healthy form of interaction that could counteract the draw of criminality that accompanied unemployment in urban areas. They also served to mitigate the damage done by the decrepit system of Bantu Education. The mobilization that resulted from these arts groups is an unexplored dimension of the development of the mass based liberation organizations that formed in the 1980s and were instrumental in forcing the apartheid government to reevaluate their obstinacy and enter into negotiations with the long suppressed black population.

Appendix A: *Drum* Stories Consulted

Issue	Author	Title
Mar. 1951	Mbeba, Alfred	"Rhodesia Road"
Apr. 1951	Pitso, Randolph Ben	"Nomoya! of the Winds"
May 1951	Sinxo, Guybon Ben	"The Wicked Adventures of Ken Kebe"
Jun. 1951	Sentso, Dyke H.	"The Harvest is Waiting"
Jul./Aug. 1951	Ekwensi, C.O.D.	"The Cup was Full"
Sept. 1951	Modisane, William 'Bloke'	"The Dignity of Begging"
Oct. 1951	Moikango, C.E.	"Mathomela's Choice"
Nov. 1951	Sentso, Dyke	"The Sun Stood Still"
Dec. 1951	Ngubane, Jordan	"The Answer He Wanted"
Jan. 1952	Bavu, Sanduza	"The Tie Pin"
Jan. 1952	Sixaba, E.A.P.	"Farm Boy"
Jan. 1952	Modisane, William (Bloke)	"The Fighter that Wore Skirts"
Jan. 1952	Sunduza, Bavu	"The Tie Pin"
Feb. 1952	'Gonzane'	"I Killed Matilda"
Feb. 1952	Rehzi, E.	"Tomorrow Never Came"
Mar. 1952	Mbebe, A.Z.T.	"Nqangela's Defeat"
Mar. 1952	Sidayiya, Douglas	"Ntombo Gets a Job"
Apr. 1952	Tsebe, D.G.	"Duma Comes Home"
May 1952	Sentso, Dyke	"Pay Back"
Jun. 1952	Sinxo, Guybon B.	"The Boomerang"
Jul. 1952	Massiye, A.S.	"The Bride-Price"
Aug. 1952	Clarke, John Henrik	"The Boy who Painted Christ Black"
Sept. 1952	Mokgalendi, Sam	"Blood Between Us"
Oct. 1952	Mdenge, Kyle	"The Betrayal"
Nov. 1952	Ekwensi, C.O.D.	"Forbidden Love"
Dec. 1952	Mdenge, Kyle	"Night of Passion"
Jan. 1953	Mogale (Maimane), Arthur	"Crime for Sale: an escapade"
Mar. 1953	Maimane (Mogale), Arthur	"Crime for Sale: another escapade"
Apr. 1953	Themba, Can	"Mob Passion"
Dec. 1953	Hlazo, Alexander	"Love's a Gamble"
Dec. 1953	Mogale (Maimane), Arthur	"You Can't Buy Me"
Jan. 1954	Modisane, William (Bloke)	"The Respectable Pickpocket"
Jan. 1954	Matthews, James	"The Champ"

Feb. 1954	Ngcobo, Duke	"When Boy Meets Girl"
Feb. 1954	Sentso, Dyke	"Other People's Goods"
Apr. 1954	Sentso, Dyke	"Under the Blue-Gum Trees"
Apr. 1954	Mtetwa, Kenneth	"His Only Love"
Sept. 1954	Matthews, James	"Dead End!"
Jan. 1955	Manqupu, Mbokotwane	"Love Comes Deadly"
Feb. 1955	Esekie, Bruno (Es'kia Mphahlele)	"The Suitcase"
Apr. 1955	Clarke, Peter	"The Departure"
May 1955	Rive, Richard	"Black and Brown Song"
Jan. 1956	Esekie, Bruno (Es'kia Mphahlele)	"Down the Quiet Street"
Jan. 1956	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"Lesane: Fanyan Arrested"
Feb. 1956	Hughes, Langston	"Cora Unashamed"
Mar. 1956	Burke, Norah	"The Family Man"
Apr. 1956	Matthews, James	"The Downfall" (Willy-Boy 1)
Apr. 1956	Rive, Richard	"They That Mourn" (Willy-Boy 2)
Apr. 1956	Clarke, Peter	"The Delinquent" (Willy-Boy 3)
Jun. 1956	Rive, Richard	"African Song"
Jul. 1956	Themba, Can	"Marta"
Aug. 1956	Ngubane, Jordan	"Man of Africa"
Nov. 1956	Matthews, James	"Penny for the Guy"
Dec. 1956	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"Lesane: Fanyan Arrested"
Jan. 1957	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"Lesane: The Arrest of Fanyan"
Feb. 1957	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"Lesane: The Indian Hawker"
Mar. 1957	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"Lesane: Another Story…"
Apr. 1957	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"Lesane: The Idiot Boy"
May 1957	Maber, Ritchie	"The Way of the Prodigal"
Jun. 1957	Wright, S.D.	"The Other Side"
Jun. 1957	Oguzie, Adolphus	"The Ivory Tower Man"
Aug. 1957	Motsisi, Casey	"Bugs"
Sept. 1957	Naidoo, Sammy	"The Gentleman Crook"
Sept. 1957	Motsisi, Casey	"Johburg Jailbugs"
Oct. 1957	Motsisi, Casey	"High Bugs"
Nov. 1957	Motsisi, Casey	"Boycott Bugs"
Jan. 1958	Motsisi, Casey	"Buggie New Year"
Feb. 1958	Motsisi, Casey	"If Bugs Were Men
Apr. 1958	Williams, Owen	"Sweepstake Winner"

Apr. 1958	Motsisi, Casey	"On the Beat"
Jun. 1958	Motsisi, Casey	"On the Beat"
Nov. 1958	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"Lesane: Neighbours"
Apr. 1963	Themba, Can	"The Urchin"

Appendix B: *The Classic* Stories and Essays Consulted

Issue	Author	Title
Vol. 1 no. 1 1963	Nakasa, Nathaniel	"Comment"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1963	Themba, Can	"The Suit"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1963	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"He and the Cat"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1963	Nkosi, Lewis	"The Promise"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1963	Sehume, Leslie	"I'm Not a Tramp"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1963	Motsisi, Casey	"A Very Important Appointment"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1963	Nakasa, Nathaniel	"Writing in South Africa"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1963	Rive, Richard	"The Party"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1963	Nakasa, Nathaniel	"Comment"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1963	Simon, Barney	"The Birds"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1963	Lessing, Doris	"Outside the Ministry"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1963	Boetie, Dugmore	"The Last Leg"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1963	Nkosi, Lewis	"Review: *African Songs* by Richard Rive"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1963	Motsisi, Casey	"Riot"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1963	Paton, Alan	Letter to the Editor
Vol. 1 no. 2 1963	Senghor, Leopold Sedar	Letter to the Editor
Vol. 1 no. 3 1964	Honwana, Luis Bernardo	"The Old Woman"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1964	Mphahlele, Ezekiel	"In Corner B"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1964	Abrahams, Lionel	"A Right Time for Trams"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1964	Nakasa, Nathaniel	"Johannesburg, Johannesburg"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1964	Barton, Frank	"Brandy & Water"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1964	Rive, Richard	Response to Nkosi's Review
Vol. 1 no. 4 1965	Simon and Motsisi	Editorial
Vol. 1 no. 4 1965	Boetie, Dugmore	"Familiarity is the Kingdom of the Lost "
Vol. 1 no. 4 1965	McGregor, Chris	"Personal Background from an Application for a Cultural Grant "
Vol. 1 no. 4 1965	Gordimer, Nadine	"One Whole Year and Even More"
Vol. 1 no. 4 1965	Ainslie, Bill	"The Living Eye: a letter to Ngatane, Motjuoadi, Mahubela, & Sitole"
Vol. 1 no. 4 1965	Zeffert, David	"For Christmas"
Vol. 1 no. 4 1965	Nkosi, Lewis	"African Writers of Today"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1966	Simon, Barney	Editor's Note

Vol. 2 no. 1 1966	Gordimer, Nadine	"One Man Living Through It"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1966	Fugard, Athol	"Letter from Athol Fugard"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1966	Simon, Barney	*Classic* Regrets
Vol. 2 no. 2 1966	Blair, Dorothy	"Whither Negritude"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1966	Diop, Birago	"Sarzan"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1966	Maroun, Edouard	"Badolos"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1966	Zobel, Joseph	"The Gramophone"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1966	Chraïbi, Driss	"Four Trunks"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1966	Baldwin, James	"Beaufort Delaney"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1967	Honwana, Luis Bernardo	"Papa Snake & I"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1967	Head, Bessie	"Village People, Botswana"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1967	Makaza, Webster	"The Slave"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1967	Simon, Barney	"The Fourth Day of Christmas"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Simon, Barney	Editorial
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Motsisi, Casey	"Can Remembered"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Mashabela, Henry	"Can Remembered"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Motjuwadi, Stanley	"Can Remembered"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Mayet, Juby	"Can Remembered"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Balaskas, Mina	"Rats"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Boetie, Dugmore	"Three Cons"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Haresnape, Geoffrey	"The Tomb"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Motsisi, Casey	"Boy-Boy"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1968	Gordimer, Nadine	"South Africa: Toward a Desk Drawer Literature"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1968	Cassirer, Reinhardt	"Todd Matshikiza"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1968	Motsisi, Casey	"Todd Matshikiza"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1968	Kumalo, Alfred	"Todd Matshikiza"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1968	Head, Bessie	"The Woman from America"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1968	Stephenson, Lynton	"The Accessory"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1968	Sikakane, Joyce	"Pete Magubane"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1968	Long	"The Fun of Living"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1968	Honwana, Luis Bernardo	"We Killed Mangy-Dog"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1969	Choonara, I.	"Grass Fire"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1969	Essop, Ahmed	"Ten Years"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1969	Abrahams, Lionel	"'Black' feeling and 'White' thinking"

Vol. 3 no. 3 1970	Hlongwane, Meshack	"A Burden of Sorrow"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1970	Hlongwane, Meshack	"The Man Who Stole a White Kid"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1970	Makaza, Webster	"Black Boy"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1970	'Long'	"The Ordeal "
Vol. 3 no. 3 1970	Miller, Wolf	"Coda"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1970	Gwala, M. Pascal	"Side-Step"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1971	Simon, Barney	Editor's Note
Vol. 3 no. 4 1971	Serote, M. Wally	"When Rebecca Fell"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1971	Serote, M. Wally	"Fogitall"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1971	Serote, M. Wally	"Lets Wander Together"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1971	Dikobe, M.	"Martha's House"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1971	Cuddumbey, E.	"Lonely Walk Home"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1971	Fugard, Athol	"Athol Fugard Notebooks"

Appendix C: *New Classic* Stories and Essays Consulted

Issue	Author	Title
no. 1 1975	Sepamla, Sydney Sipho	Editorial
no. 1 1975	Sepamla, Sydney Sipho	"King Taylor"
no. 1 1975	Mzamane, Mbulelo Vizikhungo	"The Silva Cup is Broken"
no. 1 1975	Sepamla, Sydney Sipho	"Kenalemang"
no. 1 1975	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"Old Man Motsamai's Philosophy"
no. 1 1975	Leshoai, B.L. (Bob)	Letter to Editor
no. 2 1975	Sepamla, Sipho	Editorial
no. 2 1975	Small, Adam	"Literature, Communication and S. Africa"
no. 2 1975	Gordimer, Nadine	"A Writer's Freedom"
no. 2 1975	Wilhelm, Peter	"The System"
no. 2 1975	Wilson, Lindy	"The Visit"
no. 2 1975	Leshoai, Bob	"Masilo's Adventures"
no. 2 1975	Rive, Dr. Richard	"Senghor and Negritude"
no. 3 1976	Sepamla, Sipho	Editorial
no. 3 1976	Melamu, Moteane	"Bad Times, Sad Times"
no. 3 1976	Sepamla, Sydney Sipho	"The Black Writer in South Africa Today: Problems and Dilemmas"
no. 3 1976	Livingstone, Douglas	"The Poetry of Mtshali, Serote, Sepamla, and others in English"
no. 3 1976	Knowles, Roger	"Sipho's Journey"
no. 4 1977	Sepamla, Sipho	Editorial
no. 4 1977	Leshoai, Bob	"The Nature and Use of Oral Literature"
no. 4 1977	Head, Bessie	"The Village Saint"
no. 4 1977	Mzamane, Mbulelo Vizikhungo	"The 50s and Beyond: An evaluation"
no. 4 1977	Armah, c Ayi Kwei	"Larsony or Fiction as Criticism of Fiction"
no. 4 1977	Marquard, Jean	"Regina's Baby"
no. 4 1977	Rive, Richard	"The Black Man and White Literature"
no. 5 1978	Sepamla, Sydney Sipho	Editorial
no. 5 1978	Mzamane, Mbulelo Vizikhungo	"A Present for My Wife"
no. 5 1978	Abrahams, Lionel	"On Short Story Writing"
no. 5 1978	Roberts, Sheila	"The Butcher Shop"
no. 5 1978	Head, Bessie	"Some Notes on Novel Writing"
no. 5 1978	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"Face to Face"

no. 5 1978	Mzamane, Mbulelo Vizikhungo	"Literature and Politics among Blacks in South Africa"
no. 5 1978	Maimane, J. Arthur	"Hungry Flames"

Appendix D: *Staffrider* Stories and Essays Consulted

Issue	Author	Title
Vol. 1 no. 1 1978	Ravan	"About *Staffrider*"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1978	Ntuli, K.F.S	"Magawulana"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1978	Tlali, Miriam	"Soweto Hijack!"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1978	Wilhelm, Peter	"Van"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1978	Manaka, Matsemela	"Introducing CYA, Diepkloof, Soweto
Vol. 1 no. 1 1978	Manaka, Matsemela	"Tribue to Victor Ndlazilwane"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1978	Strauss, Gertrude	"Widow's Talk"
Vol. 1 no. 1 1978	Ngcobo, Aubrey	"The Day a Leader Died"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Publications Directorate/ Ravan	Banning Letter and Response
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Essop, Ahmed	"Gladiators"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Mhlongo, Stanley	"It's Love of Freedom in this District"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"My Friend, the Outcast"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Mabogoane, Meshack	"Strangers in the Day"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Ebersohn, Wessel	"The Dumping Ground"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Tshabangu, Mango	"Thoughts on a Train"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Sello, Sekola	"Vincent: a Tribute
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Sello, Sekola	"An Encounter with Hitler"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Mashabela, Mashadi	"Barbed Wire Fence"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Tlali, Miriam	"The Point of No Return"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Cox, Pam	"Forbidden Fruit"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"The Night of a Million Spears"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"Don't be Vague, insist on Human Rights"
Vol. 1 no. 2 1978	Multiple Authors	"Casey Motsisi: Tributes"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1978	Mzamane, Mbulelo	"Sitha"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1978	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"Call Me Not a Man"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1978	Rumney, Reg	"Jane"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1978	Rumney, Reg	"The Fall of a Man of Property"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1978	Thubela, Letsaba [sic]	"I, Teacher, Humble Servant"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1978	Essop, Ahmed	"Film"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1978	Saunders, Walter	"E-Papers"
Vol. 1 no. 3 1978	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"The Motherly Embrace"

Vol. 1 no. 4 1978	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"A Glimpse of Slavery"
Vol. 1 no. 4 1978	Williams, Neil Alwin	"Just a Little Stretch of Road"
Vol. 1 no. 4 1978	Aiyer, Narain	"The Casbah"
Vol. 1 no. 4 1978	Mavuso, Xolile Thabo	"Sweet are the Uses of Adversity"
Vol. 1 no. 4 1978	Thubela, Letshaba	"The Take-over"
Vol. 1 no. 4 1978	Mphahlele, Es'kia (Zeke)	"*Staffrider* Workshop I: Some Guidelines for the Short Story"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	House, Amelia	"Awakening"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Sibeko, Mandla	"Why, Tumelo my Son?"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Rive, Richard	"Riva"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"A Son of the First Generation"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Khoza, Paul	"Whom to Blame?"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Letsoalo, Joseph Seshego	"Lebandla"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Letsoalo, Joseph Seshego	"Hungry Eyes"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Bailie, Jill	"Silent Movie"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Mphahlele, Es'kia (Zeke)	"*Staffrider* Workshop II: More guidelines for Short Story"
Vol. 2 no. 1 1979	Poland, Marguerite	"Vusumzi & the Inqola Competition"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Publications Directorate/ Ravan	Banning Letter and Response
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"A Pilgrimage to the Isle of Makana"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"The Patriot"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Gordimer, Nadine	"The Meeting"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Thubela, Letshaba	"It Does not Help"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Siluma, Michael	"The Rebel Leader"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Wildman, Christopher	"The Promise"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Mphahlele, Es'kia (Zeke)	*Staffrider* Workshop III
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Nhlabatsi, Mzwakhe	"eye"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Poland, Marguerite	"Vusumzi & the Inqola Competition"
Vol. 2 no. 2 1979	Guyo Book Club	Letter to *Staffrider*
Vol. 2 no. 3 1979	Ntuli, Funda	"Heavy News"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1979	Wilhelm, Peter	"Seth & Sam"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1979	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"3 Days in the Land of a Dying Illusion"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1979	Unattributed	"Bio of Matshoba"

Vol. 2 no. 3 1979	Rogers, Johnny	"The Road is Much Longer"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1979	Gwala, Mafika Pascal	*Staffrider* Workshop
Vol. 2 no. 3 1979	Poland, Marguerite	"Vusumzi & the Inqola Competition"
Vol. 2 no. 3 1979	*Staffrider*	"News from Southern African PEN Centre (Johannesburg)"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Siluma, Michael	"A Conversion"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Beckett, Denis	"It Exists"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Matlou, Joel	"Man Against Himself"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Martins, Dikobe	"Jazz & Rugby, Tough Games Brother
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Essop, Ahmed	"Gemini"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Skeef, Eugene	"Malo Poets"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"Towards Limbo"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Rive, Richard	"Caledon St: and other memories"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Boitumelo	"*Staffrider* Workshop: Women Writers Speak"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Mphahlele, Es'kia	"The Wisdom of Africa: notes on the oral tradition"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"Another Poet Gone: Agostinho Neto 1922-1979"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	Nkunzi, Mboma, Mdidiyeli, Linda	"*Staffrider* Children's Section: Misinga Stories"
Vol. 2 no. 4 1979	*Staffrider*	"News from the Southern African PEN Centre (Johannesburg)"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Mrs. M	Voices from the Ghetto "Kwa Mashu Speaking"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"To Kill a Man's Pride"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"Ngwana Wa Azania: a film concept"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Motana, Nape'a	"The Poet in Love"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Reddy, Jayapraga	"The Slumbering Spirit"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Essop, Ahmed	"Two-Dimensional"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Macphail, E.M.	"Saturday Afternoon"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Sigwili, Nokugcina	"Women Writers: 'Men are Always Women's Children'"
Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	Children of Crossroads Interviewed	"*Staffrider* Children's Section"

Vol. 3 no. 1 1980	*Staffrider*	"News from the Southern African PEN Centre (Johannesburg)"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1980	Gambanya/Gambanga, John	"Orphaned before Birth"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1980	Hotz, Paul	"November '76"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1980	Matlou, Joel	"Voices from the Ghetto: My Lifestyle"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1980	Chapman, Chris	"Home Territory"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1980	Mavuso, Xolile	"'The Pest of Love…'"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1980	Tlali, Miriam	"Amandla"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1980	Rabothata, Masilo	"Rastaman in Zimbabwe"
Vol. 3 no. 2 1980	*Staffrider*	"News from the Southern African PEN Centre (Johannesburg)"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	Ndebele, Njabulo	"The Music of the Violin"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	Foster, Duncan	"Societa Secreta Subversa"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	Mungoshi, Charles	"Some Kinds of Wounds"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	Wilhelm, Peter	"Jazz"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	Hermer, Carol	"Diary of Maria Tholo
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"The Betrayal"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	a lawyer	"Truth and Censorship: Another Glimpse of Slavery"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	Mphahlele, Es'kia	"The Early Years"
Vol. 3 no. 3 1980	House, Amelia	"Women Writers Speak"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Aiyer, Narain	"The Cane is Singing"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Hurtz, Kenny T.	"A Normal Day"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Sigwili, Nokugcina	"'My Dear Madam...'"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Majo, Nangirayi	"Poor Business for the Artist"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Ozynski, Joyce and Andy Mason	"Art & Society: Committed Art-where is it?"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Serote, Mongane W.	"In the Sun"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Essop, Ahmed	"East/West"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"Mhalamhala 1981"
Vol. 3 no. 4 1980-1	Mzamane, Mbulelo	"*Staffrider* Workshop: Politics and Literature in Africa: A Review"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Thomas, Gladys	"The Promise"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Siluma, Papa	"It's Necessary"

Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Tlali, Miriam	"The Haunting Melancholy of Klipvoordam"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Maseko, Bicca Muntu	"Society and Art: Art and Misconception"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Dangor, Achmat	"Jobman"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Seroke, Jaki	"*Staffrider* Profile: Poet in Exile, an interview with Mongane Serote"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Gwala, Mafika	"Reflections in a Cell"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Gordimer, Nadine	"Bushcraft"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Poland, Marguerite	"The Windflower"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Matshoba, Mtutuzeli	"Some points to ponder: thoughts on the disbanding of PEN"
Vol. 4 no. 1 1981	Kentridge, William	"Domestic Scenes"
Vol. 4 no. 2 1981	Maseko, Bheki	"Mximbithi"
Vol. 4 no. 2 1981	Maseko, Bheki	"The Digger's Closing Day"
Vol. 4 no. 2 1981	Mutloatse, Mothobi	"Hell in Azania"
Vol. 4 no. 2 1981	Asvat, Farouk	"The Barrier"
Vol. 4 no. 2 1981	Joel, Ronnie	"Notes from a Black Writer: Kimberley, the prohibition years"
Vol. 4 no. 2 1981	Thomas, Gladys	"The Rose Patterned Wallpaper"
Vol. 4 no. 2 1981	Silk, Andrew	"Modderdam: an episode in the death of a shanty town"
Vol. 4 no. 2 1981	Martins, Dikobe WaMogale	"Society and Art: Art is not Neutral, Whom does it serve?
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